





# ECCLESIASTES

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK ; AN EXEGETICAL  
ANALYSIS ; AND A TRANSLATION, WITH NOTES.





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WITH NOTES.

BY

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*A NEW EDITION.*

להבין משל ומליצה דברי חכמים וחידתם

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## PREFACE.

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THE first edition of this commentary excited a good deal of interest on account of the evidence adduced therein in favour of the influence of Greek philosophy on Ecclesiastes. With respect to the validity of the evidence, the dissentients were, I suppose, at the time of the publication of the first edition of this work, and for a good while afterwards, in the majority. More recently, however, and apart from very important additional evidence presented in the following pages, a change has occurred. It has been said, indeed, that the question now at issue is concerned, not with the reality of the influence, on the Book, of Greek thought, but with the extent of such influence. In this case, the importance of Ecclesiastes in relation to the history of religion needs scarcely to be insisted on; and it ought, I think, to be conceded that the Book should also have a place in the history of philosophy in general.

Though I have no desire to detract from the merits of Zirkel as a pioneer, in 1792, with respect to Greek influence on Ecclesiastes, I may state that what I published eighty years later was the result of independent research, and was in no way suggested by what Zirkel had written. Up to the present time I have not seen his *Untersuchungen*, and I am not aware that a copy exists in any of the public libraries of this country. Such information as I have obtained concerning the work has been derived from the statements of others. About the year 1871 I perceived an essential analogy between the Law of the Times and Seasons in the third chapter of Ecclesiastes and the Stoic moral principle of "living conformably to nature," and I

now see that indications of the influence of Greek thought on the Book are abundant and conclusive. Zirkel, however, appears to have proceeded in a different manner, and to have emphasised too strongly the presence of Greek idiom in the language. Here the evidence is at best but scanty ; and Zirkel's work can scarcely be said to have attained any conspicuous success.

The view which I presented (and now again present) of the aim and plan of the Book was not likely to escape some adverse criticism. It may seem on a superficial view improbable that the author of Ecclesiastes would devote so much of his Book to the opinions and dicta of sages and philosophers in order that, in the scanty space of the concluding verses, he should set them all aside, and direct his reader's attention to Authority and Faith. How far the position thus taken by the author of Ecclesiastes is analogous to that of St. Augustine, or of Pascal, or of an eminent living statesman and philosopher, it is not for me to determine, the function I have to discharge being that of an interpreter. Much will depend on the true sense of the last verse of the Book, the exegesis of which I have now more fully developed in the concluding note.

In the present edition of this work, as previously, the peculiarities of the language of Ecclesiastes are treated as, with respect to the date of the Book, of subordinate importance. An additional reason for such a view of the matter has been lately furnished by the discovery of fragments from the original Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus. From the evidence thus presented, Messrs. Cowley and Neubauer, the editors of the Oxford fragments, observe that the language is "classical Hebrew," though "we know from Ecclesiastes that the New-Hebrew idiom was in process of formation at this time." Whether this idiom, so far as it is exhibited in Ecclesiastes, was employed more generally, or was used, for the most part, only by members of the Jewish colleges, we have apparently no means of determining. The Son of Sirach has been regarded as belonging to the priestly caste ; and it seems by no means unlikely

that composition in the older or more classical idiom was cultivated especially in connection with the Temple service. This matter may be not without interest with regard to Ecclesiastes, but, with respect to some other portions of the Old Testament, it has far greater consequence.

For this edition the work has been re-written throughout, and many changes have been introduced. I hope that it will be found that, though there is a very substantial accord with what had been said in the previous edition, an important advance has nevertheless been made. Of the literature of Ecclesiastes published either in this country or abroad during the last twenty-five years it is scarcely necessary or desirable that I should attempt to give a complete and critical estimate.

T. T.

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FROM THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION  
(1874).

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**D**ESVŒUX, in the Preface to his book on Ecclesiastes, tells us that about thirty years had elapsed since he had first planned the work, and nearly five-and-twenty since he had published a sketch of his plan; that the work had cost him a hundredfold the time and study which he had at first imagined would be necessary; and that he had been obliged again and again to re-mould the work, casting it into a form different from that which he had at first intended.

I might, with reference to the work now submitted to the public, repeat, to a considerable extent, what was said by Desvœux. I cannot, it is true, say that thirty years have passed since I planned my work; but, still, not only is it a very long time since I attained some of the conclusions concerning the interpretation of particular passages, which I still hold, and which I have now for the first time printed, but a good many years have elapsed since I prepared for a society, with which I was at the time connected, a paper on Ecclesiastes containing and expressing those conclusions. Afterwards, I re-wrote and enlarged this paper, with a view to its being published. Other work and other engagements, however, demanded attention; and my paper in its improved form was laid aside. Subsequently, my attention being for a time less occupied with other pursuits, I took up the work anew, and again enlarging it, it assumed that tripartite form which it now presents; the paper above mentioned becoming, to a considerable extent, the basis of the Exegetical Analysis.

When the work was now, as it seemed to me, just ready for the press, I began to perceive the peculiar relation of Ecclesiastes to the post-Aristotelian philosophy. This being seen, I tried to adapt my work, by comparatively inconsiderable alterations; and I gave some account of the fact I had discovered in a pamphlet entitled *Some New Evidence as to the Date of Ecclesiastes*, London, 1872. I found, however, that the adaptation of my work which I had attempted was unsatisfactory. The relation of Ecclesiastes to the post-Aristotelian philosophy was too fundamental to be thus dealt with. Much of the work was accordingly written anew; and a good deal of illustrative matter introduced. The work has certainly cost me an expenditure of time and labour such as I could not have at all anticipated when my attention was first directed to the subject.

Of the three parts into which my work is divided, I have endeavoured to keep the second — the *Exegetical Analysis*—which gives a general view of the interpretation of Ecclesiastes, free from Hebrew quotations or such technicalities as would be unintelligible to readers not possessing a knowledge of the original languages of the Old Testament. This part of the work has, perhaps on account of its origin, referred to above, a somewhat more popular and less scientific garb than it would otherwise have had. If this be a fault, it is one which I have not cared to correct.

The *Translation* differs in no small degree from the Authorised Version, on which, however, it is, to a considerable extent, based. I may observe that I have not followed the Authorised Version with respect to the usage of printing supplied words in italics. The practice is one which it is, perhaps, impossible to adopt with perfect and entire consistency. I venture to hope, however, that my translation will not, on the whole, be found wanting in closeness to the original. The notes appended to the translation will be, I trust, not without value to the student. They must be looked upon as, in some measure, supplementary to such illustrative matter as may be found in the Introduction and Exegetical Analysis.

The function which I have attempted to discharge in the following pages is that of the interpreter. Many expository works on Ecclesiastes have been written, but the present is not an addition to their number. My object is not to deduce moral or religious lessons from the Book, but to set forth its meaning. Simply to attain this object is, however, a task of no small difficulty. The interpreter can scarcely be indifferent with respect to those grave questions which Koheleth discusses. And thus a danger arises lest the interpreter's work should be marred by the intermingling of the subjective, and lest by toning down, or dimly presenting, some of the conflicting sentiments contained in the Book, he should give an image incomplete and distorted. How far I have avoided these faults the candid and thoughtful reader may decide. Where there is so much which will probably appear new and strange, some things—possibly a good many things—may be deemed unacceptable. Still, it is perhaps not altogether impossible that my work, on the whole, may be regarded in time to come as having marked some real advance towards the full solution of the great enigma of Koheleth.

T. T.

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## I.

### INTRODUCTION.

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#### § 1.—THE CHARACTER OF THE BOOK.

**E**CCLESIASTES is distinguished among the books of the Old Testament by strongly-marked characteristics. In most of these books a relation to the theocracy is obvious and prominent; but in Ecclesiastes the theocratic element appears, at least on a cursory view, subordinate and insignificant. Ecclesiastes takes a wide and comprehensive survey of humanity, and dealing with man as man, seems scarcely to regard, if it does not entirely forget, the distinctive peculiarities of the theocratic people. Its character, too, in general, appears philosophical rather than religious. Its tone is not that of the prophet declaring to Israel "the word of the LORD," but rather that of the philosopher telling of his investigations concerning the course of things in the world, and of his attempts to solve the intricate problems presented by the condition of mankind. There are, indeed, particulars in which Ecclesiastes resembles some other of the Biblical books. A portion of its contents may seem not quite unlike the Proverbs, and there may appear ground for comparison, also, with the Book of Job, in the absence of conspicuous reference to the theocracy, in the subject-matter of the discussion, and in some of the sentiments expressed. But, with respect to its peculiar philosophical character, Ecclesiastes marks an advance on the Book of Job, which to some readers may more than compensate for its inferiority to the latter in poetical form and balanced parallelism.

The difficulties which Ecclesiastes presents have appeared so great that, with regard to these, our book has been asserted to have a pre-eminence among the Books of the Old Testament. Moreover, in its present form, the book has been viewed as a mere heap of *disjecta membra*. "This interesting treatise is," says a recent writer, "in its commonly received shape, little more than a tissue of loose, disjointed aphorisms and contradictory theses concerning the highest problems of ethics and metaphysics. The form of the work is characterised by an utter lack of plan; the matter by almost impenetrable obscurity." \* To this alleged "utter lack of plan" assent cannot be given, even if it be at the same time allowed that the book is not a systematic philosophical treatise, at least from a modern point of view. But to speak, as the writer just quoted speaks, of an irrelevancy "suggestive of the ravings of a delirious fever patient," seems to show some want of wisdom, and of that reverential regard which, on various grounds, the book may claim. It is hoped that what is said in the sequel will suffice to show that there is a plan and purpose pervading the book, even in its "contradictory theses." Still, if the difficulties of the book are not insurmountable, they are undoubtedly considerable. Its diction presents a marked difference from that of any other of the Biblical books. Much difficulty has also resulted from the failure to place the book in its true relation to history. But, in addition to this or other more usual causes of difficulty, there would certainly appear to be another which was inherent in the original composition of the book. The distinction between esoteric and exoteric doctrine, which we find afterwards in the New Testament (*e.g.* Matt. xiii. 11; 1 Cor. ii. 6), would seem to have been already operative when Ecclesiastes was written. In treating of his grand themes, the author doubtless had in view those who were already initiated, more or less, in the school of philosophical wisdom. He wrote, not for the frivolous and unlearned, but for earnest and meditative students, whose minds

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\* Dillon's *Sceptics of the Old Testament*, p. 87.

would be invigorated by grappling with difficulty, and who would be qualified to enjoy that intense pleasure of successful investigation, concerning which our author himself says: "Who is as the wise man? And who as he that knoweth the explanation of a thing? A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the sternness of his countenance is changed" (viii. 1). The position that Ecclesiastes possesses a designedly enigmatical character is one of no small importance; and it is desirable that the reader should keep it steadily in view while studying and investigating the book.

### § 2.—THE ALLEGED SOLOMONIC AUTHORSHIP.

THAT Ecclesiastes was not written by Solomon is the deliberate verdict of modern criticism; and to this verdict assent must certainly be given. The first verse of the first chapter describes what follows as "The words of Koheleth, the son of David, king in Jerusalem." And in the twelfth verse of the same chapter, where Koheleth himself speaks, we have, "I, Koheleth, was king over Israel in Jerusalem." But, after the second chapter, the Solomonic or royal character of Koheleth almost, if not altogether, disappears—at any rate till we come to xii. 9; and sometimes Koheleth's personal experience seems to become so shadowy that we might perhaps entirely forget that we are reading a narrative of such experience, if we were not reminded of the fact by such passages as vii. 15, 23 *sq.*, x. 7. If Solomon was really the author of Ecclesiastes, it seems not easy to understand why he should call himself Koheleth, instead of using his ordinary and well-known name. We may with some probability infer, from the employment of the name Koheleth, that the author of our book did not intend to be understood as meaning that the work was really written by the Solomon of Hebrew history. With regard to the first verse of the book, the remark may be made that it is a superscription resembling to some extent the titles to the Psalms and the subscriptions to the apostolical Epistles, and that thus it may be reasonably questioned whether this verse was not added by a later hand.

But, even on the supposition that the first verse was written by the author himself, little importance need be attached to the words "son of David," if the author had made his fiction sufficiently transparent by the use of the name Koheleth instead of *Shelomoh* or Solomon.

A powerful argument in favour of the late origin of the book is derived from the fact that its language makes a marked approach to Rabbinical Hebrew. With respect to isolated words or phrases, parallels may perhaps in part be found in the earlier literature, but no satisfactory answer can thus be given to an argument drawn from the prevailing and general complexion of the language.

The opinions of those competent to judge are now so generally agreed in rejecting the attribution of the book to Solomon, that a more extended discussion of the alleged Solomonic authorship may be regarded as superfluous.

### § 3.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIORITY OF ECCLESIASTES TO ECCLESIASTICUS.

PUTTING aside, therefore, the opinion that Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon, and keeping in view what has just been said with regard to its diction, we still have before us an extended period during which the book must have been composed. With a view to arriving at a more definite conclusion, we may obtain, I think, important evidence from Ecclesiasticus (taken together with the translator's prologue) as to the date before which Ecclesiastes was written. The question as to the date of Ecclesiastes might be somewhat more easily settled if we could accept the opinion that the prologue to Ecclesiasticus furnishes satisfactory evidence that the Old Testament canon was already definitely fixed. It may not be possible, however, to prove that, when the translator speaks of "the law itself, and the prophecies, and the rest of the books" (τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν βιβλίων), the third division, "the rest of the books," or the Hagiographa, was already so definite that no addition could possibly be made to it. It would certainly appear that the translator attributed some degree of antiquity to the books

of the Hagiographa, for we read in this same prologue of "the law, and the prophets, and the others who followed in their steps" (τῶν ἄλλων τῶν κατ' αὐτοὺς ἡκολουθηκότων), and of "the law, and the prophets, and the other books of the fathers" (τῶν ἄλλων πατρίων βιβλίων). The attribution of antiquity to the books of the Hagiographa does not, however, afford grounds sufficient to enable us to determine whether or not Ecclesiastes was already numbered among them. But, without attempting definitely to settle this question, we may, I think, find evidence of high probability that Ecclesiastes was in existence, not only when the translator wrote the prologue, but even when the Son of Sirach composed his book. There are several places in Ecclesiasticus which might be supposed, with more or less probability, to indicate an acquaintance with Ecclesiastes, as Ecclus. xii. 13 sq., compared with Eccl. x. 11; Ecclus. xiii. 25, 26, with Eccl. viii. 1; Ecclus. xix. 16, with Eccl. vii. 20-22; Ecclus. xx. 7, xxi. 25, 26, with Eccl. x. 2, 3, 12-14; Ecclus. xxvii. 26, with Eccl. x. 8. Such coincidences as may be found in these and other places may not be unworthy of consideration, but I would direct the reader's attention more especially to one remarkable passage (Ecclus. xxxiii. 13-15),\* which may be thus rendered: "As a potter's clay in his hand—all its ways according to his good pleasure—so men in the hand of Him who made them, to render to them according to His judgment. Opposite to evil is good, and opposite to death is life, so opposite to a pious man a sinner. And so look at all the works of the Highest—two and two, one over against another." With this passage should be compared Eccl. vii. 13-15: "Behold the work of God; for who can straighten what He hath made crooked? In the day of prosperity enjoy thyself, but in the day of adversity, behold. God, indeed, hath set the one corresponding to the other, because man findeth nothing after him. I saw all in the days of my vanity: sometimes a righteous man perisheth in his righteousness, and sometimes a wicked man prolongeth his life in his wickedness." Corresponding to

\* Otherwise differently placed (xxxvi. 13-15).



what is said in the one passage of men and their lot being "in the hand of Him who made them," like "a potter's clay," we find in the other "the work of God" in relation to men described as being such that none "can straighten what He hath made crooked." The words "opposite to evil is good" (ἀπέναντι τοῦ κακοῦ τὸ ἀγαθόν) should be compared with what is said in Ecclesiastes of "adversity" (רָצָה "evil") and "prosperity" (טוֹבָה "good"). Then it should be observed that in the words "and opposite to death is life, so opposite to a pious man a sinner," taking them in the order in which they stand, "death" in the one clause corresponds to "a pious man" in the other, and "life" to "a sinner." This seemingly inverted order, and this close and remarkable juxtaposition, may be accounted for if we turn to the passage in Ecclesiastes, where we have, "Sometimes a righteous man perisheth in his righteousness, and sometimes a wicked man longeth his life in his wickedness." Again, "look at (ἐμβλεψον εἰς) all the works of the Highest," answers to "behold (הִנֵּה) the work of God." Perhaps, however, the most important words are those which conclude the passage from Ecclesiasticus: "Two and two, one over against another" (δύο δύο ἐν κατέναντι τοῦ ενός), which should be compared with "God, indeed, hath set the one corresponding to the other" (אֱלֹהִים לָצִמְתָּהּ לְעִמָּתָהּ). The Greek words ἐν κατέναντι τοῦ ενός appear almost as if a direct translation from the Hebrew of Ecclesiastes; and it is the idea of duality in correspondence found in Ecclesiastes, one thing balancing another as made by God, that seems especially to have impressed the mind of the Son of Sirach. That the correspondence between the two passages is accidental can scarcely be regarded as probable. That the author of Ecclesiastes borrowed from Ecclesiasticus is not likely to be maintained after a careful study of the two passages. There remains the possibility that both authors may have been indebted to a common source. But, though it is probable that Ecclesiastes possesses, more or less, a composite character, yet, if the reader will mark carefully the various points of correspondence, the connec-

tion of the passage in Ecclesiastes with the context, and how in the midst of it occur the words of Koheleth, "I saw all in the days of my vanity," he is scarcely likely to come to the conclusion that the passage was taken bodily from some earlier work and transferred to Ecclesiastes.\*

The words which follow the quotation made from Ecclesiasticus are of importance with regard to the question we are considering. "I, also, *last* was awake" (καὶ γὰρ ἔσχατος ἡγρύπνησα) (*invigilans litterarum studiis*). These words are entirely suitable to the conclusion that the Son of Sirach had just been using the work of a predecessor not very far distant in time. With regard to the remainder of the verse (xxxiii. 16), there is great variation in the readings given by the MSS. and versions. According to good authority we should have, "And I inherited them, as from the beginning" (καὶ κατεκληρονόμησα αὐτοὺς καθὼς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς). This "inheritance" would consist, of course, in the work of his predecessors, which the Son of Sirach employed. "From the beginning" is more obscure, but the Son of Sirach may mean "from the beginning of the present work." The reading followed by A. V., which speaks of him as "gathering after the grape-gatherers," and "filling his winepress like a gatherer of grapes," also accords with the using the work of previous writers.

It must be maintained, then, that the passages Eccl. vii. 13-15 and Ecclus. xxxiii. 13-15 furnish weighty evidence in favour of the conclusion that Ecclesiastes was already in existence in the days of the Son of Sirach. Now, if the evidence thus adduced is valid, and if we are able to ascertain the time when Ecclesiasticus was composed, we shall have a date *before which* Ecclesiastes was written. But, before endeavouring to determine this date, it may be desirable to consider the influence exercised on Ecclesiastes

\* Dr. C. H. H. Wright, in his *Donnellan Lectures on Koheleth*, admits, on the ground of the correspondence of Ecclus. xxxiii. 13-15 and Eccl. vii. 13-15, and other coincidences, that the Son of Sirach "was well acquainted with the work of Koheleth, and borrowed thoughts from it," but regards the "remark about the potter's clay" as referable to Isaiah (see Isa. xlv. 9, lxiv. 8). Jeremiah xviii. 2-6 would be, perhaps, even more probable.

by Greek philosophy. This may enable us to determine also a serviceable date *after which* the book was written.

#### § 4.—MANIFEST INFLUENCE OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY.

JOSEPHUS, in a passage (*Contr. Ap.* 1, § 22) which has naturally attracted attention, speaks concerning the estimation of his people by the Greeks, and of Aristotle's intercourse with a certain Jew, to the following effect:—

"It is easy to perceive that not only the Greeks of least account, but those who were most distinguished for wisdom, admired those (*i.e.* Jews) whom they chanced to meet with. For Clearchus, who was a pupil of Aristotle, and second to none of the philosophers of the Peripatetic school, says, in his first book on Sleep, that his master Aristotle discoursed in this manner of a certain Jew, he ascribing the narrative to Aristotle himself, for it is thus written: 'But, while a long discourse would be tedious, it may be at the same time not amiss to relate of those things which he said such as are wonderful and philosophic. But assuredly know,' said he, 'O Hyperochides, that I shall seem to say things like dreams.' Then Hyperochides said respectfully, 'On that account, indeed, we are all anxious to hear.' 'Then,' said Aristotle, 'according to the precept of the rhetoricians, let us tell first of his race, so that we may not disobey the teachers of literary style.' 'Say, then,' said Hyperochides, 'what you think proper.' 'He, then, by race, was a Jew from Coelesyria; and his people are descendants of the Indian philosophers called, as it is said, Calani, but among the Syrians Jews, they having derived this name from their country, which is called Judæa by those who inhabit it. But the name of their city is very crabbed, for they call it Hierusalem. This man, then, being entertained by many, and coming down from the upper country to the coast, was a Greek, not merely in speech, but also in mind. And as we happened at that time to be sojourning in Asia, he having come to the parts where we were, met with us and certain other students of philosophy, and tested their wisdom. And, associating with many accomplished persons,

he imparted something more than he received.' Thus spoke Aristotle in the work of Clearchus, and, in addition, he spoke of the great and wonderful self-restraint of this Jew with regard to his mode of living and with respect to his sensual desires. And it is easy for those who wish to know more to consult the book itself, for I am careful not to quote more than is necessary."

The fact that this testimony occurs in a controversial tractate does not, perhaps, add very much to its validity, but that Aristotle, when in Mysia, should have met with a Jew, and conversed with him, is neither impossible nor improbable. Nor, especially having regard to the assertion that the Jew was from Coesylria, are we in a position to say, as a recent writer does, that this Jew having become so thoroughly Hellenised in the days of Aristotle is not to be thought of.\* There is clear evidence that the name Calani was not a pure fabrication. And even the writer just cited alludes to the crabb'd form of the name of Jerusalem,† as though this were of some importance (*Ἱερουσαλήμ*). As to Josephus's allegation that the work of Clearchus was extant and accessible, it is of course possible to say (the work in question being now lost), though not to prove, that the writing of which Josephus speaks was a forgery.‡

It is interesting, in connection with the passage quoted from Josephus, to observe that if not the first, at least nearly the first, clear evidence we have of Greek influence on Ecclesiastes connects itself with Aristotle. The third verse of the second chapter of our book may be thus translated:—

"I revolved it in my heart to excite with wine the powers of my body, and, my heart guiding wisely, also, to seize upon folly, until I should discover what is this good for the

\* So Dr. Hugo Willrich in *Juden und Griechen vor d. Makk. Erheb.*, p. 46.

† Dr. Willrich thinks that the best evidence of genuineness is to be found in the "Verwunderung über den sonderbaren Namen Ἱερουσαλήμ" (*sic*).

‡ J. G. Müller, in the posthumous edition of his *Josephus gegen den Apion*, observes, "Es ist also kein Grund, an der Aechtheit des Klearchischen Fragments zu zweifeln," and in a note on the same page (169) exclaims, "Ein grosssprecherischer Jude sollte sein Volk von den Indiern abstammen lassen!"

sons of men, which they may do under the heavens throughout the number of the days of their life."

That this passage had some connection with the *summum bonum* of the philosophers is a conclusion which readily suggests itself. It is remarkable, however, that even Grotius, though regarding Ecclesiastes as a discussion *περὶ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας*, conducted, moreover, in a manner resembling that of Aristotle, yet apparently did not discern the relation between the verse just quoted and a well-known passage in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to say that the chief subject of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is the supreme good for man, τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθόν. Of this "good" it is said in Book I, chap. vii., τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθὸν ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια γίνεται κατ' ἀρετὴν . . . ἔτι δ' ἐν βίῳ τελείῳ. The concluding words Aristotle explains, by saying that, as neither one swallow nor one day makes a spring, so neither one day nor a short time can entitle a man to be called blessed and happy.

The reader may see at once that "good for the sons of men" might stand as a translation of ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθόν. Next ἐνέργεια answers to "which they may do," the "good" in question being spoken of elsewhere as "a practical good," and, in fact, τὸ πάντων ἀκρότατον τῶν πρακτῶν ἀγαθῶν (I. iv.). To "throughout the number of the days of their life" obviously corresponds ἐν βίῳ τελείῳ, as explained by Aristotle. With respect to ψυχῆς, though formally and verbally the word is not exactly represented, the general purport of the two passages comes in this respect sufficiently close. There remains κατ' ἀρετὴν, which is omitted in Ecclesiastes. But accurately to render this expression in Hebrew would have been difficult, or impracticable. And the difficulty would be greatly increased, if account were taken of Aristotle's interposed observation εἰ δὲ πλείους αἱ ἀρεταί, κατὰ τὴν ἀρίστην καὶ τελειοτάτην.

The close relation of the passage in Ecclesiastes with Aristotle scarcely admits of question. There is no need for asserting that the author of Ecclesiastes had before him a MS. of the First Book of the Ethics, or some other



document of the Peripatetic school, from which he made a translation. This, indeed, is possible, but oral communication may have sufficed.

Some difficulty has been felt with regard to *אי זה טוב* in *אי זה טוב*, "what is this good." The difficulty disappears, however, when "this" is looked upon as referring back to the researches of previous philosophers concerning "the good." The rendering "*where* is this good," though apparently approved by Gesenius, seems less suitable to the kind of good sought for—a "good which the sons of men may *do*." But, for our present purpose, it would not be very important if preference were given to the rendering "*where* is this good."

There are at least two other places in Ecclesiastes where Aristotelian influence may be with probability discerned, a probability greatly increased by the evidence just adduced. The first of these places is Eccl. vii. 27, where Koheleth speaks of endeavouring, by the consideration of facts or persons "one by one," to discover the "thought" or "plan" which they embodied. Here we may trace the Aristotelian inductive method (*ἐπαγωγή δὲ ἡ ἀπὸ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον ἐπὶ τὰ καθόλου ἔφοδος*, *Top. I.*, chap. x.). The other passage is xii. 13, which gives the general conclusion of the Book :— "The conclusion of the discourse, the universal law, let us hear," &c. "The universal law" represents the Hebrew *הכל* (literally "the all," Sept. *τὸ πᾶν*). The expression *הכל* is perhaps as close a rendering of *τὸ καθόλου* as the language would allow. Viewed as representing *τὸ καθόλου*, the Hebrew expression just quoted gives a consistent meaning, which otherwise it seems impossible to attain. Moreover, the Mishnah, in bringing a discussion to a close with the statement of a general principle or law, uses the expression *הכלל*, which is essentially equivalent to *הכל*, in the common formula *זה הכלל*, meaning "this is the general rule." It may therefore be inferred, so far as this matter is concerned, that Aristotle had a great influence on the Jewish schools.

Among the philosophical sects which arose after the death of Aristotle, a very prominent place must be assigned

to the Stoics. Stoicism, moreover, wears in considerable part an Oriental aspect, and it is noteworthy that the early Stoic teachers were, for the most part, of Eastern extraction, coming from the islands of the Eastern Archipelago, from Asia Minor, and from Syria. Zeno, the founder of the sect, was from Citium, in Cyprus, a place said to have been colonised by Phœnicians; and he was himself reputed to be of Phœnician descent. In Zeno's earlier life, he was, according to Diogenes Laertius (VII. i. 2), engaged as a merchant, and, being shipwrecked when coming to the Piræus, he lost a quantity of purple from Phœnicia. And it would certainly appear that, after Zeno had become settled at Athens as a philosophical teacher, he still retained his connection with Eastern and Semitic peoples. He declined, it is said, to accept the Athenian citizenship, and so to sunder or weaken his connection with Citium (*De Stoic. Repugn.* 4). We find, moreover, mentioned among his immediate disciples Persæus, also from Citium, with Herillus, from Carthage, Athenodorus, from Cilicia, Dionysius, of Heraclea in Pontus, Zeno, of Sidon—not to be confounded with the Epicurean Zeno of Sidon—and Cleanthes, from Assos in the Troad. Subsequently come Chrysippus, from Soli in Cilicia—if indeed this great Stoic teacher was not instructed by Zeno himself—Diogenes, of the Babylonian Seleucia, Antipater, from Tarsus, Posidonius, from Apamea in Syria, and others.\* Now, looking at this strongly-marked connection of Stoicism with the East, we might (putting aside for the moment the chronological question) reject the notion of its being *a priori* improbable that the author of Ecclesiastes was influenced by Stoicism, and proceed to inquire whether the book itself furnished evidence showing that this influence was actually exerted. We shall probably find that the evidence in this behalf is such as can scarcely leave any reasonable doubt concerning the matter.

According to Diogenes Laertius, the great principle of

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\* A considerably larger number of names is given by the late Bishop Lightfoot in notes to the dissertation on "St. Paul and Seneca," appended to his work on *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*.

Stoic morals was expressed in the formula τὸ ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν, "to live conformably to Nature." That conduct, according to the Stoics, was virtuous which resulted from considering the manifestation in Nature of the Eternal Reason. The virtuous man, by the exercise of his reason, followed Nature.\* Now, as it seems to me, we have, in the Catalogue of the Times and Seasons, in the third chapter of our book, a setting forth of this great principle of Stoic ethics. From a theocratic point of view, this portion of the book seems to wear a strange and abnormal aspect, but if it be supposed that the Stoic principle of morality is developed therein, this aspect may be easily and fully accounted for. We shall then have, in iii. 2-8, a compendious statement of the particulars which make up human life, and for each of which there is in Nature a determined season. Each action is to be performed only at the allotted time, since "for everything there is an appointed time; and a season for every matter under heaven." The righteous man, having respect to the divinely-appointed times and seasons, acts conformably thereto; by the wicked man this natural order is disregarded and violated (iii. 16). In the next verse (iii. 17), "I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a season for every matter, and for all the work there," the last word "there" (οὗ) has occasioned perplexity, and a change of the οὗ into οὗ has been proposed. But, on the supposition that we have in iii. 1-8 a setting forth of the Stoic moral principle of "living conformably to Nature," and that verse 17 looks back to what had been said before—this word no longer presents difficulty; nay, it accords so perfectly with this supposition as to afford strong evidence of its truth. The sense will be, "There"—IN THE COURSE OF NATURE—"is a season for every matter, and for all the work" of man. And that the word "there"

\* Διόπερ τέλος γίνεται τὸ ἀκολουθῶς τῇ φύσει ζῆν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ κατὰ τε τὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ κατὰ τὴν τῶν ὅλων (Diog. Laert. VII. i. 87). Cp. § 5. The definition of Chrysippus (ζῆν κατ' ἐμπειρίαν τῶν φύσει συμβαινόντων) was probably implied from the first, even if that of Zeno was simply ὁμολογουμένως ζῆν (cp., however, Stob. II. 134).

does thus look back to verses 1-8 is shown, moreover, by the repetition from the first verse of the words עֵת לְכָל־חַפֵּץ—"a season for every matter."\*

Thus for that remarkable portion of Ecclesiastes which I have called the Catalogue of the Times and Seasons, as well as for other passages related thereto, a reasonable explanation is found, on the hypothesis that the author of Ecclesiastes was acquainted with, and influenced by, the Stoic doctrine that there is in the course of Nature a certain definite order to which it is the duty of man to conform his conduct. But the evidence of Stoic influence is greatly strengthened, when we find that there is reason to recognise the presence not only of the Stoic ethics, but also of the Stoic physical philosophy. According to this philosophy, the course of things in Nature proceeds in a predetermined order, and with invariable sequence. When one cycle is completed, the procession of events begins anew, to repeat, even in its minutest particular, what has gone before. It can scarcely be doubted that this teaching is reflected, when we read that, "as to all that God doeth, it is to be for ever: there is no making addition to it, and there is no taking away from it" (iii. 14); and that "whatever hath been, it had been long ago before; and what is to be, already hath been" (iii. 15); the course of things in the world being but like the revolution of a wheel or circle. And it is worthy of remark that, in the conception of the course of things in the world as a revolving circle,† we may find an adequate explanation of the difficult words which conclude the verse just quoted

\* There is a passage in Marcus Aurelius (iv. 32) which may be, at least to a certain extent, compared with Eccl. iii. 1-3. In this passage men are spoken of as, one age after another, "marrying, bringing up children, suffering sickness, dying, making war, feasting, trafficking, tilling, flattering, showing arrogance, suspecting, plotting, longing for some person to die, murmuring at their present state, indulging in love, laying up treasure, seeking after consulships and kingdoms." With the question (Eccl. iii. 9), "What profit hath he who worketh from that whereat he toileth?" may be compared the statement in Marcus Aurelius (*l.c.*) respecting the multitudes who in bygone times, after the intense struggle of life, "fell and were resolved into the elements."

† A conception formed, probably, by the Stoics under Pythagorean influence. The following quotation may be compared: *ἡ τε γὰρ τοῦ*

(iii. 15): "And God will seek after what hath gone before," or rendered more literally, "And God will seek after what is pursued" (אֶת־כִּדְרֵהוּ). Objects on the periphery of a revolving circle seem to chase one another, and, as the circle rotates, what may have passed out of view appears again in the same order and with the same sequence. "That which was pursued" is, as it were, sought after, and found, and brought back again. In the first chapter, also, indications of the Stoic physical philosophy seem clearly manifest. The toil of Nature is incessant, but resultless. The sun continues persistently the same monotonous course; the winds ever blow again according to their circuits; the rivers never so fill the sea that thenceforth it has no place for their waters (i. 5-7). And when we think of the Stoic doctrine that each successive cycle only repeats what has gone before, every thing, every event, and every person reappearing, we can account at once for the words, "There is nothing new under the sun. Suppose there is a thing as to which someone may say, Behold this; it is new: it hath been long ago in the olden time which was before us" (i. 9-10).<sup>\*</sup> And then, that "there is no memorial of those who went before, and even of those coming after, who are to be, there will be no memorial of them with those who will be afterwards" (i. 11)—this would naturally follow if, as the Stoics taught, each successive cycle begins entirely anew, that which went before having been ended by an all-destroying catastrophe. It is true that the author of

*σχήματος ἰδέα κύκλος· οὗτος δὲ πάντοθεν ἴσος καὶ ὁμοῖος διόπερ ἀναρχὸς καὶ ἀτελειότητος· ἥ τε τῆς κινήσεως κατὰ κύκλον . . . ἥ γε μὴν οὐσία τῶν πραγμάτων ἀνέκβατος καὶ ἀμετάβλητος διὰ τὸ μήτε ἀπὸ τοῦ χείρονος ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον μήτε ἀπὸ τοῦ βελτίονος ἐπὶ τὸ χείρον πεφυκέναι μεταβάλλειν.* Ocellus, *De Universi Natura*, cap. i. 15. The analogy of this with what is said in Eccl. iii. is sufficiently clear, whatever may be the date of the work just quoted. In Ocellus we have again the circular movement and the impossibility of change or addition. Yet, I suppose no one will suggest that what is said in Ocellus was derived from Ecclesiastes.

<sup>\*</sup> The opinions of the Stoics seem to have varied as to the question of actual personal identity in the successive cycles—as to whether, for example, in the next cycle, Socrates himself will again marry Xanthippe, and again be accused by Anytus and Meletus, or whether a quasi-Socrates will marry a quasi-Xanthippe, and be accused by a quasi-Anytus and a quasi-Meletus. Seneca (Ep. xxxvi. 10) declares for actual personal identity: "Veniet iterum qui nos in lucem reponat dies, quem multi recusarent, nisi oblitos reduceret . . . Aequo animo debet rediturus exire."

Ecclesiastes does not mention a general conflagration at the end of each cycle; indeed he speaks of the permanence of the earth (i. 4). But this was a matter with respect to which the Stoic teachers themselves differed in opinion.\* Apart, however, from the belief in a general conflagration, it was quite possible to maintain the doctrine of cycles, of a periodical revolution in the history of the world, so that "there was nothing new under the sun." Marcus Aurelius (xi. 1) speaks as though history repeated itself in about forty years, and he places among the privileges of a reasonable soul (τὰ ἴδια τῆς λογικῆς ψυχῆς) to perceive and comprehend the periodical new birth of all things (τὴν περιοδικὴν παλιγγενεσίαν τῶν ὅλων), and to discern that those who shall come afterwards will see nothing newer than fell to the lot of their predecessors, and that those who went before saw nothing additional to what their successors were destined to behold. Still it is, perhaps, questionable whether such a mention of the permanence of the earth as that of i. 4 necessarily involves the denial of a periodic conflagration. The matter of the earth might be conceived of as enduring, even if all memorials of man and his works were consumed.

Koheleth's great thought that "all is vanity" may be regarded as a natural inference from the Stoic doctrines. It may seem, however, that, if there is a predetermined order in Nature, an all-pervading Providence, a designed mutual conformity between man and the world, then it involves some inconsistency to look upon worldly things and worldly pursuits with contempt, and to speak of them as unsatisfying and vain. Still, amidst Nature's sternly invariable revolutions, man can make no real advance; nay, he can secure for himself no permanent place or footing. His perpetual striving must ever be vain and fruitless. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." We may thus account for what is said by Marcus Aurelius; that highly to esteem

\* Boëthius, as it would appear from Philo (*De Mundi Incorrupt.*), followed by Panætius and Posidonius, denied the Stoic doctrine concerning both the conflagrations (τὰς ἐκπυρώσεις) and the renewal or regeneration (παλιγγενεσίαν) of the world.

worldly things is to resemble the man who should set his affection on some mean and insignificant bird flying past him, which he has no sooner beheld than it is gone out of his sight (vi. 15). Men and their concerns are as smoke, as very nothingness (x. 31).

Further, on the supposition that Stoic influence is manifested in our book, we may be able readily to account for its recognition of an overmastering Fate or Destiny, since, as is well known, the Stoics were Fatalists or Determinists. Thus Plutarch, quoting from Chrysippus (*περὶ φύσεως*) says, "It is thus of necessity that we should be in the condition in which we are, whether, contrary to our own nature, we are diseased or maimed, or whether we have become grammarians or musicians." "And we must speak in like manner concerning our virtue and vice, and in general concerning arts and the ignorance of arts" (*De Stoic. Rep.* 34). Keeping what has just been said in view, we need have little difficulty in understanding how it is that Koheleth teaches that neither the swift, nor the mighty, nor the wise, nor the prudent, can command success, but that all are alike exposed to the effect of overmastering seasons and accidents (ix. 11); and that "the sons of men are snared by an evil season, when it falleth upon them suddenly," like "fishes that are caught in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare" (ix. 12).

On the seventh chapter of our book Stoicism seems to have had great influence. No doubt, with regard to some, perhaps a considerable proportion, of the verses taken separately, it might be urged that, apart from the influence of Stoicism similar sentiments might be found elsewhere. One place, however, may be mentioned, the thought it contains being expressed in so remarkable a form as scarcely to be open to the objection just mentioned. In vii. 14 (a verse already quoted, § 3) good and evil, prosperity and adversity, are said to have been placed by God in contiguity or correspondence, as though the one were complementary to the other. "God, indeed, hath set the one corresponding to the other, because man findeth

nothing after him." It is scarcely possible not to recognise here (taking into account at the same time what follows) the notion of the Stoics that evil was the necessary companion of good, both together making up a suitable and harmonious system. This notion Plutarch derides (*De Comm. Not.* 13). It is not necessary, he urges, to the perfection of a chorus, that one or more should sing out of tune; and similarly it does not conduce to the health of the body that some member should be diseased. "Was it fitting that the badness of Melitus should appear over against (πρὸς) the justice of Socrates, and the unbridled conduct of Cleon over against the worthiness of Pericles (πρὸς τὴν Περικλέους καλοκάγαθειαν)?" It is clear enough that we have here "evil set over against," or "corresponding to, good."

Scarcely less remarkable is the evidence of Stoical influence given by the exalted presentation of Law in the eighth chapter of our book. That Law should be embodied in "the King" is in accordance with the general tendency of Stoicism towards the concrete.\* With reference to the words "the King," it is noteworthy that Chrysippus—virtually quoting from Pindar (see Plato's *Gorgias*, 484 b)—is said to have begun his treatise περὶ νόμου with the words "Law is the King of all things divine and human" (ὁ νόμος πάντων ἐστὶ βασιλεὺς θεῶν τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων).† Chrysippus, moreover, described Law as having jurisdiction over things honourable and disgraceful, as giving the rule distinguishing the just from the unjust, and as, in the domain of the State, commanding what is to be done, and forbidding what is not to be done.‡ This

\* It is thus that Seneca even discusses at some length the question "jactata apud nostros; an justitia, fortitudo, prudentia ceteraque virtutes animalia sint" (*Epist. Mor.* XIX. (113)).

† As to the expression of viii. 2, "the King's commandment," more literally, "the mouth of the King," there is a quotation from Posidonius, preserved by Seneca, which should be compared: "Legem [enim inquit,] brevem esse oportet, quo facilius ab imperitis teneatur, velut emissæ divinitus vox sit; jubeat, non disputet, nihil videtur mihi frigidius, nihil ineptius quam lex cum prologo: mone; dic quid me velis fecisse: non disco, sed pareo" (*Epist. Mor.* XV. (94)).

‡ Spengel, *Συναγωγή Τεχνῶν, sive Artium Scriptores*, etc., p. 177, note.



Stoic conception of Law is in harmony with what is said in viii. 2-5. But to understand the transition from human to divine law, which certainly appears in Eccl. viii., and to explain that remarkable and difficult expression in ver. 10, "the place of the holy," or "the place of the Holy One" (cp. Hab. iii. 3; Job vi. 10, cited by Nowack) \* we should remember that, according to Stoic ideas, Law was God, or God was Law.† With this in view there need be little difficulty as to the holy place which the wicked rulers, had occupied.

Here reference may be made to a matter which will possibly seem remote, but which may be found upon reflection to have an important relation to the subject which we have been discussing. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans (xiii. 1-5), enjoins, in a most remarkable manner, submission to the civil authority. Some general analogy with Eccl. viii. 2 *sqq.* is not very difficult to discern. It may seem, however, strange, if not unaccountable (according to the usually admitted date of the Epistle), with Nero on the throne, and in view of what his predecessors had been, that the apostle should, without, exception or qualification, speak of the powers that be as "ordained of God," and—still more strange—tell the readers of his epistle that they need have "no fear of the power," which would praise them if they did what was good. This seems of difficult reconciliation with the history of the apostle himself, and with the treatment which his Master received "under Pontius Pilate," the representative of Rome. St. Paul's conception of the "higher power" — "the minister of God" — sitting evidently in "the place of the Holy One," is manifestly ideal, like that of "the King" in Ecclesiastes.

\* But there is no probable allusion particularly to Jerusalem as the place of the Holy One.

† Chrysippus, it would seem, according to the testimony of Phædrus, regarded Law as God, "Phædrus lieh ihm dazu bloss den Satz *καὶ τὸν νόμον θεὸν ὀνείσαι Χρύσιππος*" (Krische, *Forschungen*, p. 475). An unknown poet, quoted in Stobæus gives *ὁ γὰρ θεὸς μέγιστος ἀνθρώποις νόμος*. This poet was probably a Stoic, as appears to have been the opinion of Mohnike, who placed the quotation on the title of his *Kleanthes der Stoiker*.

An easy explanation of this fact, and of other indications of Stoicism which appear in the apostle's writings, is suggested by his coming from that great seat of learning and philosophy, Tarsus. Probably enough he was familiar with the treatise on Law by Chrysippus, who came from Soli, a place not far distant from Tarsus. And thus, without supposing a virtual quotation from Ecclesiastes, we are enabled to account for the remarkable analogy.\*

In this place it seems unnecessary to adduce more than one other indication of the influence of Stoic teaching on Ecclesiastes. According to the Stoics folly is madness, all fools are mad (λέγουσι . . . πάντας τε τοὺς ἄφρονας μαίνεσθαι· οὐ γὰρ φρονίμους εἶναι, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν ἔσσην τῇ ἀφροσύνῃ μανίαν πάντα πράττειν (*Diog. Laert.* vii. 124)). And in the class of fools, and consequently of madmen, they included the great mass of mankind:—

"Quem mala stultitia et quemcunque inscitia veri  
Caecum agit, insanum Chrysippi porticus et grex  
Autumat. Haec populos, haec magnos formula reges,  
Excepto sapiente, tenet."—HORACE, *Sat.* ii. 3.

Now in the way in which the word הוֹלָלוֹת "madness"† is employed in our book—and it is important that the word occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament‡—we may find some reflection of this peculiarly Stoic mode of expression, that folly is madness; that fools are mad. As an example may be given the words of ii. 12, "And I turned to contemplate wisdom, and madness, and folly."

\* 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, need not be here taken into account; for this passage like others in the epistle, was pretty evidently written under the influence of the Epistle to the Romans. As to the influence of Stoicism on the New Testament, see the dissertation on "St. Paul and Seneca," appended to Lightfoot on the *Philippians*.

† הוֹלָלוֹת—if indeed הוֹלָלוֹת is a true plural—is derived from הָלַל a word which is probably onomatopœtic, representing the resonance of a sounding body when struck. It seems likely that, from thus representing the giving forth of sound, the word came to denote also the effulgence of light, and afterwards that bursting forth and frenzy characteristic of some forms of mental derangement. The הוֹלָלִים of the Psalms are probably the "arrogant," whose pride, boasting, and display contrast with the humility and subdued behaviour of the pious. (See Psal. lxxv. 5).

‡ This remark includes the form with *shurek* in the last syllable (see x. 13, though, possibly, the sense here is somewhat different). That a novel or unusual word should be used to denote a recently imported idea would not be surprising.

Probably, however, we ought here to regard the וְסִכְלִית as intended to qualify and explain the הוֹלִלִית preceding, and accordingly to render, "I turned to contemplate . . . madness, *even* folly." But, without this change, it may be at once seen, not only that the ideas of "madness" and "folly" are associated together, but that "madness" stands first, in contrast to "wisdom," though manifestly it is not mental derangement to which reference is made. Similar is i. 17, "And I set my heart on knowing wisdom, and on knowing *madness and folly*" (or "madness, *even* folly"). So also "madness" in a moral sense is spoken of in vii. 25: "I proceeded, I and my heart, to know, and to explore, and to seek out wisdom and a plan, and to know *the depravity of obduracy and folly, even madness.*" Others might, perhaps, be inclined to translate this passage somewhat differently, but I do not see that any change which could fairly be made would much affect the matter we have now under consideration. Again, in ix. 3, "This is evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one lot to all; therefore, indeed, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and *madness* is in their heart during their life; and afterwards they go to the dead." Here the "madness" spoken of is manifestly moral. Regarded as reflecting the Stoic doctrine, the way in which, in these passages, our book speaks of "madness" may be reasonably accounted for, but, looked at in any other way, it will probably remain a perplexing, or even an inexplicable, phenomenon.

The evidence of Stoic influence which has been adduced can scarcely be regarded as other than valid and cogent; but it is strengthened very materially when we find indications of the presence, also, of the opposed and antithetical doctrine of Epicureanism. The reader's attention may be directed to two places, one of which shall be that much-discussed passage, iii. 18-22, the other v. 18-20. The first passage may be given thus: "I said in my heart, concerning the sons of men, God meaneth to test them, and to see that they are beasts, even they themselves; for the lot of the sons of men is also the lot of beasts; and there is one lot to

them: as is the death of the one, so is the death of the other, and there is one spirit to them all, and pre-eminence of man over the beasts there is none; for they are all vanity. All are going to one place: all were from the dust; and all are returning to the dust. Who knoweth as to the spirit of the sons of men whether it goeth up on high, or as to the spirit of the beasts whether it goeth down beneath to the earth? And I saw that there is nothing better than that man should be glad in his works, for that is his portion; for who will bring him to look on what will be after him?" In the emphatic manner in which it is denied that man has any pre-eminence over the beasts, and asserted that "there is one spirit to them all," we may trace with probability an allusion to the Stoic distinction between brutes and men, according to which the former possessed an unreasoning soul, while the latter, having a reasonable soul, constituted a class by themselves. And in accordance with this distinction, the Stoics, while allowing, with regard to the human soul, the possibility of an ascent upward to the ether, denied, as we may well believe, any such measure of immortality to the souls of brutes. That men and beasts came alike at first from dust or earth (עפר)\* accords with the Epicurean doctrine as to the origin of animals and men—

"Quum prorepserunt primis animalia terris,  
Mutum et turpe pecus."—HORACE, *Sat.* i. 3.

The statement that all are alike returning to dust is probably to be understood as conveying in a general way the Epicurean denial of man's immortality, yet without implying that the subtle and minute atoms of which the human soul, according to Lucretius (iii. 425 *sq.*), consists, do not at death disperse themselves like smoke or vapour. The twenty-second verse: "And I saw that there is nothing better than that man should be glad in his works, for that

\* With the A. V. I have rendered עפר by "dust," but the word must not be understood as necessarily excluding the idea of moisture (Sept. in this place *χρός, χροῦν*)—a matter of some importance with respect to the Epicurean view of the origin of animals. Even in Gen. ii. 7 the word probably denotes clay or moist plastic earth, such as could be moulded into the figure of a man.

is his portion; for who will bring him to look on what will be after him?" is to be understood, in accordance with what has been said, as giving the great principle of Epicurean moral science, that man being what he is, happiness or pleasure in this life should be his aim and object, since this is the highest good which he can possibly attain.

The Epicurean conception of life appears, perhaps, with even greater clearness in the passage v. 18-20: "Lo, that is what I have seen good, what I have seen suitable, to eat, and to drink, and to experience enjoyment from all one's toil which he toileth under the sun, during the number of the days of his life, which God hath given him, for that is his portion. Also as to every man to whom God hath given wealth and treasures, and hath given him power to eat therefrom, and to receive his portion, and to rejoice in his toil: as to this, it is the gift of God; so that he remembereth not much the days of his life, for God is making answer to the joy of his heart." The last verse—to which I would more especially direct the reader's attention—contains two statements; first, that the person in so happy a condition as that described, "remembereth not much the days of his life," and, secondly, according to the translation just given, that "God is making answer to the joy of his heart." Both of these remarkable statements may be explained on the supposition that the Epicurean conception of happiness was in the mind of the author of Ecclesiastes when he wrote the passage. In the first statement, in the "not remembering much the days of life," as they glide by in calm enjoyment, we may discern that *ἀταραξία*, that perfect tranquillity, which the Epicureans so highly esteemed. In the second statement the words translated "God is making answer to the joy of his heart," have caused a good deal of difficulty to the interpreters; and from the translation given it may seem at first sight impossible to obtain a consistent sense. The difficulty presents itself in relation to the word *פִּתְּוָה*, which, thus printed, must be taken as the participle *Hiphil* of *פָּתַח*. Now it would appear that this verb, from having the signification of

"answering," came to denote the singing of responsive choirs (cp. Ezra iii. 11; 1 Sam. xxi. 12 Heb.).\* This usage may seem, at first, to have little to do with the matter now before us, but if the reader will nevertheless bear this usage in mind, a consideration of the Epicurean theology may help us to a reasonable solution of the difficulty. The Gods were conceived of, according to Epicurean ideas, not only as perfectly happy, but as enjoying a felicity analogous to that which it was the object of the Epicurean philosophy to attain. According to the work of Philodemus on the mode of life of the Gods (*περὶ τῆς τῶν θεῶν εὐστοχομένης διαγωγῆς*†), fragments of which were found at Herculaneum, the Gods, though exempt from sleep and death, require nourishment, possess habitations, and converse in Greek, or in language not greatly differing therefrom. "In short, he imagines the Gods to be a society of Epicurean philosophers, who have everything that they can desire—everlasting life, no care, and perpetual opportunities of sweet converse" (Zeller, *Stoics, &c.*, Eng. Transl., New Edit., p. 468). "Moreover, these Gods are innumerable. If the number of mortal beings is infinite, the law of counterpoise requires that the numbers of immortal beings must not be less" (Zeller, p. 469; Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* i. 19, (50).‡ And Epicurus himself tells Menoeceus, in the letter found in Diogenes Laertius, "You will live as a God among men ;

\* In the Mishnah (*Moed Katon*, iii. 9) the "answering" (עֲנִי) of women lamenting for the dead, (כְּעֲנִיָּה) is distinguished from the קִינָה in that the former is said to imply the utterance of all the women together (שְׂכָל עֲנִיָּה כְּאֶחָד), while the latter expresses one woman's uttering her lamentation alone first, and then all answering after her (כָּל עֲנִיָּה אַחֲרֶיהָ), in accordance, in the view of the Mishnist, with Jer. ix. 20. Additional illustration may be derived from *Berakoth* viii. 8, where it is laid down that when, in a company, an Israelite pronounces a blessing it is allowed to the company to answer "Amen" (עֲנִי אָמֵן) while he is still speaking, but, in the case of a Samaritan, not till the conclusion of the blessing has been heard.

† With the addition *κατὰ Ζήνωνος* or *κατὰ Ζήνωνα*, but it is uncertain which, on account of the imperfection of the MS. The former expression would refer to the founder of Stoicism, the latter to Zeno of Sidon, the Epicurean.

‡ "In qua intelligi necesse est, eam esse naturam, ut omnia omnibus paribus paria respondeant. Hanc *ισοπουλίαν* appellat Epicurus, id est aequabilem tributionem. Ex hac illud igitur efficitur, si mortalium tanta multitudo sit, esse immortalium non minorem; et si quae interimant, innumerabilia sunt, etiam ea quae conservent, infinita esse debere.

for in no respect like to a mortal animal is a man living in the enjoyment of immortal blessings" (x. 135). But if Gods and wise men thus live in an analogous manner, and enjoy the same kind of happiness, they may not unnaturally be conceived of as responsive choirs, singing alternate or harmonious strains. And thus we may dispose, not unsatisfactorily, of the difficulty in the expression "answering to the joy of his heart." Perhaps, however, the idea intended to be conveyed would be still better expressed, if we translate, "God is making harmony *with* the joy of his heart."\* The probability of the interpretation which has been thus suggested may appear the stronger if the reader keeps clearly in view what has been said above as to the representation, in the first part of ver. 20, of the Epicurean ἀταραξία; for it is this perfect tranquillity which, according to the Epicurean conception, the Gods pre-eminently enjoy, in that space which they inhabit between the worlds—the Gods in their tranquil abodes—

"Quas neque concutiunt venti nec nubila nimbis  
Aspergunt neque nix acri concreta pruina  
Cana cadens violat semperque innubilis aether  
Integit et large diffuso lumine rident,  
Omnia suppeditat porro natura neque ulla  
Res animi pacem delibat tempore in ullo."

LUCR. iii. 19-24.

It remains, however, to be remarked that "the Gods" have become in our passage "the Deity" or "God" (האלהים) and that God, instead of living in utter disregard of men and their wants, is represented as apportioning the duration of life (ver. 18), as well as giving wealth and treasures, and the power of enjoying them, when they have been given (ver. 19). To the contact of Epicureanism with Judaism, these departures from the true Epicurean theology may be, perhaps, with most probability, ascribed.†

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\* It may be remarked that ענה is followed by ל of the person whose praise is celebrated (cf. 1 Sam. xxi. 12; Ps. cxlvii. 7). Such a meaning would be altogether unsuitable here. This requires to be borne in mind with respect to the construction in our passage with ב.

† This is said, of course, on account of the construction of האלהים with the singular לענה; but on this account little difficulty need be felt, for it would appear, for example, that even Philodemus sometimes uses δ θεός of "the Deity" or "God" in a general way (e.g. op. cit. Herc. Vol. tom. vi. col. 10).

There is one other passage in our book, whose accordance with what we know of the post-Aristotelian philosophers it may be well at least to mention:—"And further, be admonished, my son, by these; *as to the making of many books there is no end*; and much close study is a wearying of the flesh" (xii. 12). The representation of great literary activity thus given appears entirely to agree with accounts which have come down to us concerning the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers. With respect to the writings of Epicurus, Diogenes speaks of about three hundred rolls (x. 26). The same author tells us that Apollodorus ὁ κηποτύραννος\* composed above four hundred books (x. 25), but that Chrysippus, through his surpassing application, left behind him compositions amounting in number to more than seven hundred and five (vii. 180). And as to there being "no end" to the post-Aristotelian book-making, it would appear that the same subjects were again and again discussed, and that, to a considerable extent, successive philosophers gave to their works titles identical with those which had been employed by their predecessors.

The evidence thus brought before the reader is, I venture to think, entirely conclusive. That Greek philosophy, and especially Stoicism, exercised an influence on Ecclesiastes must be regarded as manifest and certain. This statement is made with respect to the evidence taken as a whole, but as it seems to me, if the congruous facts were considerably fewer in number, it would still be difficult to avoid the same conclusion. Against the evidence of Stoic and Epicurean influence, no very great success is likely to be attained by a vague and general statement that Stoicism, in its essence, may have existed in the East before Zeno, and that the principle of making pleasure the end of existence was doubtless acted on by many who never heard of Epicurus.† Moreover, there is the remarkable fact that, while in the

\* The supremacy of Apollodorus in the Garden was probably between about 125 and 90 B.C.

† In accordance with the remark of Grotius: "Non primo Epicuro aut Epicureis in mentem venit in voluptate ea quae sensibus percipitur beatitudinem esse positam. Sed jam olim multis hominibus cogitatio incidit, quae tamen vana recte instituto iudici comperitur."



history of philosophy the appearance of Stoicism and Epicureanism is nearly simultaneous, Stoical and Epicurean elements appear also together in Ecclesiastes. This fact, even on a more superficial and general view, would require explanation.

Although, in accordance with what has been said, to Stoicism must be assigned the first place as a system of thought having influence on Ecclesiastes, yet cogent evidence of Aristotelian doctrine has also been adduced. And there would be no insurmountable difficulty (*a priori*) in the way of the supposition that the author of Ecclesiastes was acquainted with the doctrines or the writings of still earlier Greek philosophers. But, in relation to this matter, we ought not to lose sight of the composite character which Stoicism certainly possessed. From the Pythagoreans the Stoics in all probability derived the cycles, while the doctrine that the world was evolved from fire,\* and will end in a universal conflagration, was clearly derived from Heraclitus. The notion of a direct and predominating influence of Heraclitus on our book is certainly not to be entertained. The view of the course of things in the world as found in Ecclesiastes agrees with the physical theory of the Stoics, not with that of Heraclitus. This great philosopher, no doubt, conceived of all things as in motion, like the waters of a river into which it is impossible to step twice, for these waters are constantly changing. There appears, however, to be no evidence that he had any idea of a *cycle*, properly so called, or that he formed the conception of the course of things in the world being like a revolving circle, though, no doubt, it may be argued that "the way up and down" makes an approach to this conception. But the idea of revolution, properly so called, we do certainly appear to find, both in Ecclesiastes (iii. 14, 15) and among the Stoics. Thus Nemesis (*De Natura Hominis*, cap. 38) tells us that the Stoics considered that the great conflagration would occur

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\* Στοιχείον εἶναι φάσι τῶν ὄντων τὸ πῦρ, καθάπερ Ἡράκλειτος (Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.* lib. xv., vol. iv., p. 58, ed. Gaisford).

when the planets, in certain definite periods of time, had returned to exactly the place which each occupied when the world was formed; and also that the Gods, who were exempt from destruction,\* having followed and traced the course of one circuit (*παρακολουθήσαντες μιᾷ περιόδῳ*) knew therefrom all that is to happen in future cycles and in coming time.† But, in order to refute the position that it was the teaching of Heraclitus which exercised a predominant influence on our book, it is scarcely necessary to advert to more than one fact. Ecclesiastes ignores the cardinal Heraclitean principle that all things are derived from fire. Even in speaking of the future of the earth, he omits, in accordance with what has been already observed, to say that the earth will eventually be subdued by fire. On the contrary, he says, "The earth abideth for ever" (i. 4). Such omission is altogether inconceivable on the part of an ardent Heraclitean, possessed by the idea of the descent from fire and the ascent to fire (*ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω*), and of even the world itself being always an ever-living fire ‡

But while the possibility of the author of Ecclesiastes and other learned Jews being acquainted with the doctrines even of philosophers who had preceded Aristotle need not be denied, it is in the post-Aristotelian philosophy, and especially in Stoicism, that we may discern characteristics likely to conciliate favour from the theocratic people. Stoicism wore an Oriental aspect, due, no doubt, in part, in accordance with what has been before said, to the Oriental origin of its founder and of so many of its early teachers. And to the connection of Stoicism with the East in its first teachers may be with probability ascribed, at least to a considerable extent, the choice which it made among the doctrines of the Greek philosophers, as well as the spirit

\* According to what may be called the orthodox Stoic theology, it would seem that Zeus alone is eternal, subordinate Gods ceasing to exist independently at the end of the cycle.

† So far as the matter in question is concerned, the testimony of Nemesius accords with that of other authorities.

‡ Prof. Edm. Pfeleiderer's Heraclitean theory of Ecclesiastes, as given in the Appendix to his *Philosophie des Heraklit von Ephesus im Lichte der Mysterienidee*, does not seem to have met with many adherents.

in which it dealt with these doctrines. "To this fact," observed the late Bishop Lightfoot, "may be ascribed the intense moral earnestness which was its most honourable characteristic." "The meeting of Eastern and Western ideas had been prepared by the conquest of Alexander, and the production of Stoicism was one of its first-fruits." "Its essence consists in the introduction of the Semitic temperament and a Semitic spirit into Greek philosophy" (Sir A. Grant, *Ethics of Aristotle*, Essay vi., p. 309, Fourth Edition). "Founded," remarks Zeller, "as is their whole view of the world, upon the idea of one Divine Being, begetting from Himself and containing in Himself all finite creatures, upholding them by His might, ruling them according to an unalterable law, and thus manifesting Himself everywhere, their philosophy bears a decidedly religious character. Indeed, there is hardly a single prominent feature in the Stoic system which is not, more or less, connected with theology" (*The Stoics*, etc., Eng. transl., p. 341, New Edit.). If any system of Greek philosophy could be accepted among the Jews, it may be reasonably supposed that Stoicism would find acceptance, pervaded, so largely as it was, by a moral and theological spirit, and moulded as it had been, to so considerable an extent, by Oriental influences.

What has just been said should prepare us to admit the *à priori* probability that the Stoic teaching might in some particulars suffer modification among Jewish thinkers. And if it did suffer such modification, it was to be expected as probable that the author of Ecclesiastes would not deal so much with pure Stoicism as with those philosophical opinions which were promulgated in the Jewish schools of his day. And the same remark applies to Epicureanism. It is therefore little to the purpose to say that this or that particular dogma, or this or that particular expression, is absent from our book. The author of Ecclesiastes must not be regarded as if he had written a mere academical dissertation on foreign philosophy, without having in view any practical object. The influence of Greek thought

might have been quite discernible, even if slight. But instead of being slight it is, on the contrary, exceedingly strong. And if the evidence which has been brought before the reader is taken as a whole, it can scarcely be regarded as other than entirely conclusive, so conclusive, indeed, as to render it unnecessary to advert to the general tone of the book, and the calm philosophical candour with which contradictory sentiments are set forth, though an argument thence drawn would not be without weight.\*

#### § 5.—THE APPROXIMATE DATE OF THE BOOK.

THE influence of Greek philosophy, especially of Stoicism and Epicureanism, on Ecclesiastes, while it is in other respects a matter of great interest and importance, affords us valuable aid with respect to the date after which the book was composed. It would seem probable that the book was not written till after the death of both Zeno and Epicurus. The year 270 B.C. is given as the year of the death of Epicurus. The precise date of Zeno's death is not known, but it probably occurred some years before 250 B.C. We may then take this year, 250 B.C., as a date *after which* Ecclesiastes was written. Now if the evidence already adduced (§ 3) as to the priority of Ecclesiastes to Ecclesiasticus is valid, and if we are able to ascertain the time when the latter was composed, we shall have also a date *before which* Ecclesiastes was written.

The indications of time which Ecclesiasticus and its prologue present are not altogether without ambiguity, but from the words of the prologue, ἐν γὰρ τῷ ὁγδόῳ καὶ τριακοστῷ ἔτει ἐπὶ τοῦ Εὐεργέτου βασιλείᾳ παραγεννηθεὶς εἰς Αἴγυπτον, a reasonable conclusion as to the date of the

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\* Aber so viel scheint festzustehn, dass nur ein vom Hellenismus befruchteter oder doch wenigstens beeinflusster jüdischer Geist ein solches Werk hervorbringen konnte" (Cornill, *Einführung in d. A. T.*, Zw. Aufl., p. 252). "Maar wel moeten wij, ter volledige verklaring van zijn boek, aannemen, dat hij van de Grieksche wijsgeeren en hunne stellingen had gehoord en daarvan een diepen indruk ontvangen. Daarvoor pleit meer dan éene der boven erkende herinneringen aan hunne uitspraken, maar meer nog, zoo ik mij niet bedrieg, de kalme vrijmoedigheid, waarmede hij zijne beschouwingen en lessen voordraagt" (Kuenen, *Historisch-critisch Onderzoek*, Tw. Uitg., 3de Deel, 1ste Stuk, pp. 197, 198).

book may be drawn. It would certainly appear that the translator, who was the author's grandson, went into Egypt in the thirty-eighth year of the reign\* of the second Ptolemy bearing the title Euergetes, Ptolemy Physcon. Further, the conclusion appears well supported that the years of Physcon's reign were reckoned, not from the death of his brother Ptolemy Philometor, but from Physcon's first assumption of regal state, twenty-four years before (170 B.C.). The date at which the translator of Sirach came into Egypt has thus been given as 132 B.C. Now if we suppose that nearly fifty years had elapsed since the grandfather composed the book, we may place its date at 180 B.C. And this we may assign as a date *before which* Ecclesiastes was written. From 250, the date previously given, to 180 B.C., there is a period of seventy years, somewhere during which the composition of Ecclesiastes may be placed. But while, on the one hand, it would seem likely that Ecclesiastes was written some time before Ecclesiasticus, so, on the other, if we consider how Koheleth has, to a considerable extent, assimilated both Stoicism and Epicureanism, and how Koheleth is identified with the ancient King Solomon, it may well seem probable that these philosophical systems had already, when Ecclesiastes was written, acquired some degree of age. Perhaps, then, we cannot, on the whole, better satisfy the conditions of the problem than by placing the composition of our book at about 200 B.C., a date assigned by Hitzig on other grounds.

Possibly, however, it may be questioned whether the Stoical element in Ecclesiastes does not indicate a Stoicism more fully developed than that of Zeno and his immediate followers. Such a doubt may be suggested by the representation of the Stoic moral principle in iii. 2-8. According to Stobaeus (ii. 134), Zeno's formula was τὸ ὁμολογουμένως ζῆν. Cleanthes added τῇ φύσει, but

\* A comparison should be made in the Greek of the following passages cited by Fritzsche in the *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch* (Introduction to Sirach): 1 Macc. xiii. 42, xiv. 27; Hag. i. 1, ii. 1; Zech. i. 7, vii. 1.

Chrysippus more explicitly gave *ζῆν κατ' ἐμπειρίαν τῶν φύσει συμβαινόντων*. Certainly it would appear that the principle of "living conformably to Nature" must have been developed as fully as this before such a detailed representation as that of iii. 2-8 could have been given. And, judging from the accounts which have come down to us, it would seem that the presentation of Law in the eighth chapter gives evidence of the influence of Chrysippus. Some doubt, however, may be felt as to whether we have the means of accurately distinguishing between the doctrine of Zeno, of Cleanthes, and of Chrysippus. But the date of Ecclesiastes need not be much affected, if it be supposed—as seems probable—that the author of Ecclesiastes possessed some acquaintance with the teaching of Chrysippus, since the death of that philosopher is placed in 207 B.C. If, however, somewhat recent modifications of Stoic doctrine were put into the mouth of Koheleth, this need not be regarded as inconsistent with what has been said above. Stoicism, as a system, would still have acquired some degree of age. And it may be said that—putting aside the argument which has been laid before the reader—it is scarcely conceivable that such a book as Ecclesiastes could have been written after the commencement of the Maccabean war, or perhaps even for some time before that event. It seems not easy to give any date more probable than that already suggested, about 200 B.C.

Before closing this section it is worthy of observation how nearly Luther, apparently by the inspiration of genius, attained to a correct view of the age of Ecclesiastes and of other matters connected therewith (see *Tischröden*, vol. vi., p. 128, Ed. Irmischer). He looked upon the book as composed by Sirach in the Maccabean period, and though in part essentially Solomonic, yet otherwise like a Talmud, with its materials drawn from many books probably found in the library of Ptolemy Euergetes. It would thus even appear that Luther perceived or suspected the connection of Ecclesiastes with Greek thought.

## § 6.—GENERAL VIEW OF THE DESIGN OF THE BOOK.

WE have now arrived at a point in the investigation from which we may be enabled to take a general view of the design and plan of the book. If Greek philosophy found its way into Judæa, it was not likely, even in the more religious form of Stoicism, to have an influence favourable to maintaining in simplicity and integrity the faith and piety of the theocratic people. But, in the shape of Epicureanism, the effect might be expected to be still more marked and manifest. It might therefore be thought probable *à priori* that a book like Ecclesiastes, dealing with Greek philosophy, would be intended to dissuade from, and not to encourage, philosophical study. It is in accordance with such a view that, both at the beginning and at the end of the philosophical portion of our book (i. 2 to xii. 8) is found the full, deep utterance, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." In accordance, also, with such a view is the admonition or warning against study and book-making found in xii. 12, and especially also is the emphatic injunction of xii. 13 to fear God and to obey His commands. Thus, in view of what has been already said, it may be regarded as probable that, when Ecclesiastes was written, the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies were exerting among the theocratic people an influence adverse to the ancient faith of Judaism. The acquaintance with Greek philosophy which our book displays may induce us to conclude that the book was, probably, with regard to the author himself, a recantation, while it was intended to dissuade others from philosophical speculation, and to recall them to the fear of God and the observance of the Law.

## § 7.—THE CONNECTION OF ECCLESIASTES WITH JEWISH HISTORY.—THE THREE SECTS.

HERE, however, the question may be not unreasonably asked, Are the facts of Jewish history in accord with the

conclusions just expressed? Do these facts harmonise with the belief that, about the year 200 B.C., the doctrines of Greek philosophers, and especially those of the Stoics and Epicureans, were exerting such an influence among the Jews as would give occasion for these doctrines to be spoken of after the manner found in Ecclesiastes? These questions may be, I think, most satisfactorily answered in the affirmative.

First, the view of the design and intention of Ecclesiastes just suggested is in harmony with the incontestable fact that, about twenty-five years later than the date 200 B.C.—that is, at the commencement of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes—the effects of Hellenising influence were most signally displayed. The account given in 2 Macc. iv. (comp. 1 Macc. i. 11 *sqq.* and Josephus, *Antiq.* xii. 5, § 1) tells of two successive high priests bearing Greek names, *Jason* and *Menelaus*. These, moreover, were followed, after no very long interval, by another called *Alcimus*. Of persons not bearing the sacerdotal office it is scarcely necessary to speak. Then we read of Jewish youths wearing on their heads the *petasus* after the Greek fashion; of *theori* sent from Jerusalem to the quinquennial festival in honour of the Tyrian Hercules; of a gymnasium opened at Jerusalem; of competitions in throwing the *discus*, and even of the priests being so affected by the Hellenising mania as to neglect the very service of the Temple. The narrative of the Second Book of Maccabees attributes this state of things to the influence of the high-priest Jason; but it might well be looked upon as probable, even apart from direct evidence, that causes tending to this outburst of Hellenism had been for a good while at work, and that, prior to those revolutionary attempts of Jason and Antiochus Epiphanes which resulted in the Maccabean war, the people, or a considerable portion of them, were already, to no small extent, pervaded with the Hellenising spirit. We have, however, the testimony of 1 Macc. i. 11-13: “In those days there went forth from Israel sons transgressing the law; and they persuaded many, saying, Let us go and



make a covenant with the Gentiles round about us, for, since the day when we were separated from them, many evils have overtaken us. And the proposal seemed good in their eyes. And certain from the people manifested their zeal, and went to the king; and he gave them authority to establish the institutions of the Gentiles." It would seem not unlikely, too, taking into account 1 Macc. ii. 42 (with the probably true reading *Ἀσιδαίων*), that already, before the war, things had gone so far that a distinct party—that of the Assideans—was formed, opposed to Hellenising innovation on the ancestral religion and ancient customs of Judaism.

If, however, we attempt to trace this Jewish Hellenism to its source, and to indicate its historical development, we have to encounter serious difficulty resulting from the scantiness and imperfection of the sources of Jewish history for so long a period prior to the commencement of the reign of Epiphanes. Yet, during the period of considerably more than a century which, at the year 200 B.C., had elapsed since the death of Alexander the Great, we may, without difficulty, discern various causes which would naturally tend to break down Jewish exclusiveness, and to open a way for the admission of Greek thought and Greek culture. The influence of Alexander's conquests must, of course, not be neglected. Then, the first three Ptolemies, Soter, Philadelphus, and Euergetes, seem generally to have acted in a mild and lenient manner towards their Jewish tributaries in Palestine, and to have been popular with them. The conciliatory influence of the policy of the first three Ptolemies was, it may be reasonably supposed, strengthened by the privileges conferred on the Jews in Egypt, and, perhaps, at the time, still more considerably by the translation of the Pentateuch into the Greek language. And it should be remembered that there would probably be by no means infrequent intercourse between Jews of Palestine and their brethren subject to Hellenising influence in Alexandria, Coele Syria, and elsewhere. Then, with reference to Greek philosophy finding acceptance among

the Jews, it may be said that the state of things in Palestine under the Ptolemies may have been, on the whole, more favourable to philosophical speculation than would have been a condition of political independence. The latter condition, with a more intense national life, would, it seems likely, have been less suitable to the habit of mind which philosophical study requires. It is true that, about the date 200 B.C., the Jews had been exposed to suffering through the wars which Antiochus the Great was carrying on against Egypt, so that Josephus says, "their situation was not at all behind that of a ship storm-tossed, and distressed by the waves on both sides, between Antiochus's prosperity and its change, on the other hand, to adversity" (*Antiq.* xii. 3, § 3). But to one acquainted with the history of the period when philosophy attained its highest development in Greece, the instability spoken of by Josephus can scarcely seem out of harmony with the supposition that the study of philosophy was at the same time vigorously pursued.

It may be observed, moreover, with reference to that unstable position of the Jews to which reference has just been made, that it is at least not out of harmony with those passages in Ecclesiastes which speak of the uncertainty of human affairs, and of prosperity being suddenly exchanged for adversity. (See xi. 2-4 *et al.*) This may be said, even though the nature of the book requires us to be very cautious in admitting the existence of any allusions to contemporary history.

Evidence in favour of intercourse with Greece on the part of the Jews about 200 B.C. or somewhat later is furnished by the letter of the Spartan king to Onias III. as given by Josephus (*Antiq.* xii. 4, § 10; cp. 1 Macc. xii.), in which it is asserted that both Jews and Spartans were descended from Abraham. But, for our present argument, it is of no great consequence to defend the genuineness of this letter.

Of considerable importance in relation to our inquiry is the brief statement of the Mishnah concerning Antigonus

of Socho (אנטיגנוס איש סוכו). According to *Aboth* i. 3, Antigonus came next in the Rabbinical succession after Simon the Just, and received from him the Mishnic tradition. In the passage cited Antigonus is also particularly distinguished as having taught that men should not serve God like hirelings, impelled by the hope of a reward. If we accept the historical position assigned by the Mishnah to Antigonus—and there appears no sufficient reason for discrediting it—we may regard him as living in the first half of the third century before Christ. He is thus the first Jew of whom we have any knowledge as bearing a Greek name—a very noteworthy circumstance; and the question may suggest itself, Has this Greek name of Antigonus any essential connection with his doctrine concerning the hope of reward? Now, as Epicurus was teaching between about 300 B.C. and 270 B.C., it may seem by no means impossible (taking into account Antigonus's Greek name) that his doctrine contained some dim reflection of the Epicurean denial of man's immortality. Indeed, it may well be looked upon as far from unlikely (in accordance with what is said in *Eccelus*. xxxix. 4), that Antigonus had travelled to some of the Greek cities; that, affected with admiration for Greek philosophy and culture, he adopted a Greek name, and that, though, of course, it cannot be by any means supposed that he abandoned Jewish monotheism or the Jewish ritual, yet that his subsequent theological teaching was to some extent influenced and modified by what he had heard of Epicurean doctrine. Such an hypothesis may derive some confirmation from the account given in the *Aboth* of *R. Nathan* concerning Antigonus and the Boethusians and Zadokites, or Sadducees. According to this account, Antigonus had two disciples, Boethus and Zadok, who repeated his teaching (שהיו שניו בדבריו). This was done, moreover, by successive generations of disciples; and thence it arose in the course of time that, through the teaching of Antigonus, the future state and the resurrection of the dead were called in question. And this scepticism in the school of Antigonus resulted in

apostasy from the Law on the part of the Boethusians and Sadducees. It is not necessary to maintain the actual personality of Boethus and Zadok as disciples of Antigonus. Putting this aside, the connecting of the Sadducean denial of a future state with the school of Antigonus is of no slight importance; and, bearing in mind what has been already said as to the Greek name of Antigonus, it may well appear that in the doctrine attributed to Antigonus in the Mishnah, we have a noteworthy indication of the influence of Greek philosophy.

Then it is well worthy to be observed that the Mishnah (*Berakoth*, ix. 5) looks back upon a time when the Epicureans (האפיקורוסין) corrupted the Jewish faith, saying that there is only one world. In consequence of this Epicurean doctrine, the Mishnist tells us that מן העולם ועד העולם was used in all forms of blessing in the sanctuary, where מן העולם had been previously employed. It is true that with the Old Testament before us (see *Nehem.* ix. 5 *al.*), we cannot very easily admit that any such change was consequent on the diffusion of the doctrine of Epicurus with regard to a future state. But, nevertheless, I see no sufficient reason for regarding the word "Epicureans" in the passage cited as equivalent merely to "heretics" or "atheists."\* It appears to me—especially taking into account evidence before adduced—altogether the most probable conclusion that the Mishnic writer speaks of corruption and apostasy consequent on the acceptance of doctrine originating with the true Epicureans, even though what he connects therewith may not be admissible. I do not, however, maintain that the Jews did not sometimes designate as Epicureans those who could not be regarded as disciples of Epicurus, but this usage is probably to be looked upon as secondary and subordinate.†

The sources of Jewish history do not, with regard to Stoicism, furnish us, so far as I know, with any evidence as

\* The reading הַכִּינִין, "the heretics," is probably to be regarded as inadmissible, in accordance with the critical rule that the more difficult reading is to be preferred.

† *Sanhedr.* xi. 1. and *Rosh hashshana* ii. 1, may also be compared.

to its introduction among the Jews prior to 200 B.C., similar to the evidence which has been laid before the reader with respect to Epicureanism; but since, for reasons which have been mentioned in the previous section, Stoicism would seem much more likely than Epicureanism to find favour with Jewish minds, we might well conclude that, if there were among the Jews disciples of Epicurus, there must also have been disciples of his contemporary, Zeno. Stoicism, however, would more easily allow of interfusion and incorporation with Judaism than would the doctrines of Epicurus. Probably the adoption and assimilation of doctrines derived from the Porch did not lead to apostasy, or occasion any marked or conspicuous change, and on this account, as appears likely, the sources of Jewish history are silent as to the time of the introduction of Stoicism.

Important evidence with respect to the close union of a modified Stoicism with conservative Judaism is furnished by the Fourth Book of Maccabees. Here Stoicism is exhibited associated and interwoven with Judaic legalism, and the determination to suffer martyrdom rather than taste meats forbidden by the Law is ascribed to the exercise of "pious reasoning," and the tractate itself professes to be "most philosophical." This evidence may dispose us to regard with some favour what Josephus says of three philosophical sects having in his day existed for a very long time among the Jews (*Antiq.* xviii. 1, § 2). It cannot be asserted that indications of the three great Jewish sects—the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes—appear in Ecclesiastes, however true it may be that principles characteristic of these sects are already to be discerned in the book, lying in the germ, and awaiting historical development.\* And if in Ecclesiastes we really have evidence that, about the year 200 B.C., the doctrines of the Porch and the Garden had partially found disciples among the Jews, it may very possibly seem that the testimony of Josephus just alluded to as to the three

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\* Cp. Knobel, *Comm. über d. Buch Koheleth*, p. 93; Ewald, *Gesch. des V. Isr.*, vol. iv., p. 430; *Die sal. Schrift*, p. 271.

Jewish sects, and as to the sect of the Pharisees coming near to that of the Stoics (ἡ παραπλήσιός ἐστι τῇ παρ' Ἑλλῃσι Στωικῇ λεγομένη—*Vita*, 2), may be far more trustworthy than some authors have maintained. We may well hesitate to affirm that, in the statements referred to, the historian diverged from the truth, influenced by a desire to conciliate for Jewish institutions the favour and esteem of his Greek readers. And thus we shall not be disposed readily to allow that we have a Jewish idea awkwardly dressed up in a Greek garb (cp. Graetz, *Gesch.* vol. iii., p. 455, 2nd ed.), when Josephus tells us that "the Pharisees ascribe all things to Fate and God" (Φαρισαῖοι . . . εἰμαρμένη τε καὶ θεῷ προσάπτουσι πάντα—*Bell. Jud.* ii. 8, § 14). Not only is the union of the two ideas of "God" and "Fate" entirely in accordance with the Stoic theology, but the very language employed finds its parallel in the words of Cleanthes, preserved in Epictetus (*Man.* 53):—

Ἄγον δέ μ', ὦ Ζεῦ, καὶ σύ γ' ἡ Πεπρωμένη.

And when Josephus (*l.c.*) says further that, according to the Pharisees, the moral character of the actions of men lies for the most part in their own power, though fate does always co-operate, we see brought into view the difficulty which was felt by the Stoics, and which attaches to every system which attempts to reconcile necessity with moral responsibility; τὸ μὲν πράττειν τὰ δίκαια καὶ μὴ, κατὰ τὸ πλείστον ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις κείσθαι, βοηθεῖν δὲ εἰς ἕκαστον καὶ τὴν εἰμαρμένην. It was probably the attempts made by the Stoics to escape from this difficulty which led Plutarch (*De Plac.* i. 27, § 3) to say that they taught that some things were determined by Fate, while others were not so determined (τὰ μὲν εἰμάρθαι, τὰ δ' ἀνείμάρθαι). And this is just what Josephus says of the Pharisees in *Antiq.* xiii. 5, § 9, τινὰ καὶ οὐ πάντα τῆς εἰμαρμένης εἶναι λέγουσιν. Now, in Ecclesiastes, not only does the doctrine of Fatalism present itself, but we have the two ideas of Fate and a personal God (ix. 1, 2-12); and the difficulty of reconciling the conception of a moral government with that of a predestined plan or scheme of the world is clearly

manifested. This may predispose us to the acceptance of Josephus's testimony concerning the Fatalistic doctrine of the Pharisees, and of his statement that the Pharisees came very near to the Stoics.

In the account which Josephus gives of the eschatological doctrine of the Pharisees (*De Bell. Jud.* ii. 8, § 14), he says that they teach that "the souls of good men only pass over into other bodies" (μεταβαίνειν δὲ εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν μὲν); and, according to *Antiq.* xviii. 1, § 3, it was believed that those who have lived virtuously "have the liberty again to live" (ῥαστώνην τοῦ ἀναβιοῦν). From these passages (cp. Acts xxiii. 8) we may infer with some probability that the teaching of the Pharisees concerning the resurrection was a modification of the Stoic doctrine with respect to the reappearance of the same, or, as it were the same, persons in successive cycles. If the same persons were to reappear, it may have been supposed that their souls would eternally survive, and that they would be clothed in the next cycle with new bodies. The limitation to the souls of good men may have proceeded from an unwillingness to make any admission tending to the conclusion that God is the Author of evil, and that evil is even permanent in the constitution of the world. And here it is particularly worthy of remark, that Nemesius (*De Nat. Hom.* cap. 38) says that there were those in his day who spoke of the Stoic doctrine concerning a cyclical reproduction and restoration as being the source even of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection (καὶ διὰ ταύτην τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν φασὶ τινες τοὺς Χριστιανούς τὴν ἀνάστασιν φαντάζεσθαι). It is deserving notice, also, that, in opposing this assertion, Nemesius does not allege that the Christian resurrection is to be different in kind from that of the Stoics, but that it will occur only once, and will not take place periodically (οὐ κατὰ περίοδον ἔσσεσθαι).

With respect to the Sadducees, I assent—in accordance with what has been said above—to the opinion which connects this sect with the Epicureans.\* What Josephus

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\* On this subject authorities are cited by Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Græca*, vol. iii., p. 610.

states as to the teaching of the Sadducees agrees remarkably well with the Epicureanism of Ecclesiastes. According to Koheleth (Eccl. iii. 19-21), none can discern whether the spirit of man goes upward, or the spirit of the beast goes downward. Both man and beast are from the earth, and both are alike returning to dust. Josephus tells us that the Sadducees "do away with the permanent existence of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades" (*De Bell. Jud.* ii. 8, § 14), and that they teach that souls and bodies perish together (*Antiq.* xviii. 1, § 4). And the Jewish historian says further concerning the Sadducees that they "do away with Fate entirely, and they assign to the Deity such a position as neither to do evil, nor to take oversight\* [of the world]"; and they say that good and evil lie before man for his own choice, and that it pertains to every one to follow his own judgment in accepting the one or the other (*De Bell. Jud.* ii. 8, § 14; comp. *Antiq.* xiii. 5, § 9).

But though there appears strong reason for connecting the Sadducees with the Epicureans, yet it could scarcely be correct to regard them as wholly, or perhaps even chiefly, a philosophical sect. However paradoxical the opinion may at first sight appear, while connecting the Sadducees with the Epicureans, I at the same time adopt the opinion that the Sadducees were the priestly aristocracy between the Return from the Captivity and the Maccabean war. This accords in part with the opinion of Geiger (*Urschrift, &c.*, p. 101 *sq.*) With this writer I look, also, upon the name "Sadducees" or "Zadokites" as representing the *בני צדוק* of Ezek. xliii. 19, xliv. 15 *al.*, and consequently the Zadok of R. Nathan appears to be most probably a mythical personage, invented in order to explain the designation of the Sadducees. This is, perhaps, scarcely the place for a full discussion of the tenets of the Sadducees, but it is, I venture to think, on such a complex view

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\* The apparently true reading *ἐφορᾶν*, denying the moral government of the world, is important with regard to the derivation of the Sadducean doctrine from the Epicureans. The now common reading of *μὴ δρᾶν* is attributed to a "critical conjecture" of Grotius.



as that just suggested that the statements of the New Testament, the Talmud, and Josephus can be most fully reconciled. With regard to the New Testament, we are thus enabled to explain that very important passage (Acts v. 17), which speaks of "the high priest and all they who were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees" (cp. iv. 1), and also those places which speak of the Sadducean denial of the resurrection (Matt. xxii. 23 *al.*)—implying by this denial, as it would certainly appear, the disavowal of a future state—and of their allegation that neither angel nor spirit really exists (Acts xxiii. 8).

To account for the facts concerning the Sadducees, we may suppose that when, during the third century B.C., Greek philosophy obtained acceptance among the Jews, Epicureanism was adopted by a large proportion of the priestly aristocracy, so that the denial of man's immortality, and of other doctrines connected therewith, became characteristic of the "sons of Zadok." However improbable it may seem at first sight that the ministers of religion should become Epicureans, such a conclusion is entirely in accordance with the Maccabean history, with the part played by the high priests in the Hellenising apostasy, and with the priests neglecting the sacrifices of the Temple through their eagerness to engage in the performances which took place in connection with the newly-established gymnasium (2 Macc. iv. 13, 14). The adoption of Epicurean principles may well, in the case of many of the priestly class, have prepared the way for more open revolt or apostasy. And here it should not, perhaps, be passed over, that though there is nothing which can enable us to identify certainly the Epicureanism of Ecclesiastes with the priests, yet it may be worthy of mention that the answer in chap. v. to the Epicurean sentiments found in chaps. iii. and iv. commences with allusions to the Temple and its services: "Take heed to thy steps when thou goest to the House of God," &c.; "When thou vowest a vow unto God, delay not to pay it," &c. (chap. v. 1, 4).

If we decline to regard the Sadducees as pure Epicureans,

in like manner it should be held that the Pharisees were not mere Jewish Stoics. The *Chasidim*, or Assideans of Maccabean times, were probably the common progenitors of both the Pharisees and the Essenes. The Assideans were distinguished by their zeal for the Law, and for the maintenance of their ancestral institutions. But so profound had been the influence of Greek philosophy, and so homogeneous did the doctrines of the Porch seem to be with Judaism, that—as appears to have been the case—Assidean conservatism became invested to some extent with a Stoic garb. The Stoical character of the Assideans may have been derived from the adhesion of the Jewish Stoics to that party, when the tendency of the Epicureans—or at least of that portion of them found among the partisans of Hellenism—to open revolt and apostasy became manifest and developed. But, however this may be, the facts seem certainly to point to a close union of Stoicism with conservative Judaism. And, in accordance with what has been said already, the testimony of the Fourth Book of Maccabees is important with regard to this matter, whatever opinion may be formed concerning its date.

After the Maccabean war, the powerful reaction which had been manifested therein appears to have exerted itself in developing or strengthening tendencies to asceticism and stricter legalism. Although, with Ecclesiastes before us, we may well believe that the tendencies just mentioned were by no means latent even before the war, yet it was probably not till afterwards that they gained distinct expression and embodiment in the divergent sects of the Pharisees and the Essenes. These sects, however, may be regarded as bearing witness after their separation to the pre-Maccabean influence of Stoicism. In the case of the Essenes, possibly more numerous points of connection with Stoicism might be indicated than in that of the Pharisees, though a complete explanation of Essene rites and observances could not thus be given. There is a good deal to be said in favour of the opinion of Zeller and Schürer, which considers Essenism as developed under the influence

of Pythagoreanism, at least if such influence is regarded as merely partial. But a full discussion of the doctrines and practices of the Essenes might lead us too far away from our proper subject.

The Essenes appear to have carried with them into their seclusion a name representing *Chasidim*, the designation of the stock whence, according to the view above given, both they and the Pharisees had sprung. I am not able, however, to suggest any new reason for the change which the name, on this view of it, must have undergone. With regard to the Pharisees, their name פרושין ("separated") entirely agrees with the conclusion that they represented and embodied the tendency to a strict legalism. They were separated and distinguished by their higher ceremonial purity. The clothes of common country people (עם הארץ), the Mishnah (*Chagigah* ii. 7) tells us, were of no higher degree of sanctity than that which marked them as worthy to be trodden upon by Pharisees (מדרס לפרושין). The Pharisee is probably to be identified with the *chaber* (*Demai*, ii. 3), and as such he belonged to a society under special restrictions as to its intercourse with common people (*Demai*, l.c.)\* Thus, however the mass of the people may have been affected towards the Pharisees, it is certainly incorrect to say that they *were* Pharisees. The Pharisees were thus outwardly distinguished by their ceremonial legalism, though in their Stoic doctrines they gave evidence—as the Sadducees did by their Epicureanism—how deeply penetrating had been, previous to the Maccabean war, the influence of Greek philosophy.

With respect to the historical position of the author of Ecclesiastes, the contents of the book and the indications which have been reviewed in this section, appear alike in harmony with the conclusion that the introduction of Greek philosophy had not as yet resulted in outward

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\* "Bertinorius autem aperte asserit idem esse חבר et פרוש, *Socium et Pharisæum* . . . *Pharisæi*, quia seipsos separabant ab omni immunditie et a cibo immundo, et a plebe de cibo minus sollicita . . . *Socii* idem vocati respectu Societatis inter se ad pollutionem vitandam initæ" (Guisius in Surenhusius's Mishnah).

division or complete defection. Neither Stoics nor even Epicureans had put themselves quite outside the pale of the theocracy. And thus we may compare to some extent the position of the author of our book with that of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who was concerned with the tendency to apostatise, and not with open and manifest apostasy from the faith.

### § 8.—ECCLESIASTES AND THE BOOK OF JOB.

KÖSTER, in his work on Job and Ecclesiastes, speaks of the two books as having so considerable a number of points of resemblance as to suggest the inference that the author of Ecclesiastes not only had Job before his eyes, but in various places actually imitated its matter or its language. Köster adduces the obvious analogy between Eccl. v. 14 (15) and Job i. 21, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither," together with various other alleged resemblances, some of which perhaps are not equally striking. But among those deserving of closer attention must certainly be placed the resemblance between Job xxviii. 28 and Eccl. xii. 13.\* But we require to go beyond Köster's observation that both passages teach that the fear of God is the highest wisdom for man, since usually the pious man fares better than the sinner. To this view strong objection may certainly be made.

Into the question whether the twenty-eighth chapter and that preceding were suitably assigned to Job as speaker it is not necessary to enter. It may be remarked, however, that, in the particular with which we are now concerned, Ecclesiastes furnishes us with an argument of some cogency that the author of our book had before him a Hebrew text substantially identical with that which has come down to us as the Book of Job. The twenty-eighth

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\* It is, perhaps, necessary here to say that when I wrote on the subject of this section in *The Academy* of December 22, 1894, I was not acquainted with Köster's book, which is entitled *Das Buch Hiob und der Prediger Salomons nach ihrer strophischen Anordnung übersetzt*, Schleswig, 1881. Köster's work might have been more valuable if he had discussed more fully the relation between the two books. But his brief treatment of the subject must be regarded as, to a great extent, *bahnbrechend*, with respect to this particular matter.

chapter of Job begins abruptly, but its relation to the general subject of the Book is not very difficult to discern, and there can scarcely be a doubt that this portion of Job would be regarded with keen interest by the author of such a book as Ecclesiastes, deeply concerned as the latter book is with the dark mystery surrounding God's work among men. According to Job this work is, with reference to its plan and intention, involved in impenetrable obscurity, resembling the depths of the earth, dark as the shallow of death. But there is, notwithstanding the resemblance to these depths, an important difference. Beneath the obscurity which veils the divine procedure in the world, none has ever penetrated. No searcher has succeeded in disclosing the matchless treasure which this obscurity conceals—a wisdom more precious than the gold of Ophir, the onyx, or the sapphire. Contrasting, however, with this impotence and failure, is the miner's signal success, not only in finding treasures amid the darkness, but also in bringing forth to light things hidden. He not merely discovers silver, but finds a way to bring it out (מִצֵּץ, Job xxviii. 1); and gold and other metals are brought forth, and refined or melted, so as to become subservient to the uses of man. But "wisdom"—the divine transcendent wisdom—"whence shall it come? and where is the place of understanding? seeing that it is hidden from the eyes of all living" (xxviii. 20, 21).

It is very noteworthy that the last verse of the chapter (xxviii. 28) stands in marked contrast to what had gone before. By setting forth the impenetrable obscurity in which the divine procedure was veiled, the author virtually dissuades men from abortive attempts to discover the philosophy of the world, the transcendent wisdom. The problem was impracticable, even for intellects the most powerful and acute. Nevertheless there is "wisdom" and "understanding" (בִּינָה, Sept. ἐπιστήμη) for man, consisting in the fear of God and the avoidance of sin: "And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

When *Ecclesiastes* was written Judaism had, as we have seen, come into contact with Greek thought. But the discovery of the world-philosophy in its moral aspect was as remote as ever. All speculation concerning it was "vanity of vanities." The incongruous utterances of the sages as given in the discourse of Koheleth (§ 11), furnished a warning against wearying the flesh by fruitless study, and by making books without end (*Eccl.* xii. 12). Then follows in our book the great general conclusion in a verse presenting a most remarkable parallel to *Job* xxviii. 28; a parallel which can scarcely be regarded as accidental, especially when what precedes in both *Job* and *Ecclesiastes* is taken into account: "The conclusion of the discourse, the universal law, let us hear: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the universal law for man" (*Eccl.* xii. 13). The way in which "man" is spoken of in both *Job* and *Ecclesiastes* is very noteworthy.

The discussion of various other parallels between the two books may be omitted in this section; but something additional must yet be said on the great thought of *Ecclesiastes* that the work of God among men—the busy work which rests neither by day nor night—is shrouded in impenetrable darkness, defying the scrutiny even of the wisest:—

"I saw as to all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work which is done under the sun, because that, though man should toil in seeking it, yet will he not find it out; and, even if the wise man should think to know it, he will not be able to find it out" (*Eccl.* viii. 17).

This is obviously in accordance with *Job* xxviii.; but the analogy with *Job* xi. 7-9 is scarcely less striking:—

"Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? [It is] as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof [is] longer than the earth, and broader than the sea" [A. V.].

But perhaps this passage in *Job* discovers a still closer analogy with *Eccl.* vii. 23, 24:—

"I said, I will be wise; but it was too far off for me.

That which was far off and exceedingly deep, who could find it out?"

Possibly we should come nearest the truth if we say, not merely that the author of *Ecclesiastes* kept *Job* in view as he wrote, and that the expressions he employs were in various places actual imitations of the earlier book, but that he had made *Job* the subject of study so close and continued, that he had, so to speak, in good part assimilated the contents of the book, and that consequently its thought, and sometimes its language, easily and naturally presented themselves to his mind.

#### § 9.—*ECCLESIASTES AND THE PSALMS.*

WITH regard to the *Psalms*, or, at least, with respect to one particular Psalm (lxxiii.), it is possible to speak quite as strongly as we have just spoken concerning *Job*, perhaps even more strongly. No doubt an analogy between the subject-matter of the Psalm just mentioned and that of *Ecclesiastes* has been previously perceived. Indeed, it could scarcely be overlooked. Thus, in his *Bampton Lectures*, Professor Cheyne says of the Psalm in question: "It reminds us of *Koheleth* in that it deals with a grave moral problem; but whereas the wise man leaves the difficulty almost where he found it, the Psalmist discovers for it a deep religious solution" (p. 148). And Delitzsch in his commentary on *Ecclesiastes* remarks a resemblance in diction between Ps. lxxiii. 17 and Eccl. v. 1 (iv. 17 Heb.). This resemblance might easily have led to a recognition of the true relation between the two writers. Eccl. v. 1 may be given thus: "Take heed to thy steps when thou goest to the house of God; for more acceptable is it to draw nigh to hear, than for fools to offer a sacrifice, though they mean not to do evil." And, in the Authorised Version, Ps. lxxiii. 17 is represented in this manner: "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; [then] understood I their end."

The mention of "going to the house of God" in *Ecclesiastes* is, if taken alone, somewhat difficult of explanation, but it becomes more intelligible if there is an allusion to

what had been previously said by the Psalmist. That the "going into the sanctuary of God" spoken of in the Psalm is metaphorical has been repeatedly maintained; and the use in the Hebrew of a plural form for "sanctuary" at least agrees with this view, the plural (מִקְדָּשִׁים) tending more towards the abstract than the singular would have done. In Ecclesiastes, however, the parallel expression is in the singular; but, apart from a comparison with the Psalm, there was strong reason, having regard to the context, to take as the meaning of the caution concerning "going to the house of God" that he who treats of the moral administration of the world comes, as it were, into the presence of God, and should therefore speak with caution and deliberation. If it be asked, however, Does the writer of Ecclesiastes mean that the pious utterances of the Psalmist are "the sacrifice of fools"? (Eccl. v. 1) it may be replied that it is not perhaps necessary to go so far as to make this inference, even though a profound difference of view between the Psalmist and the author of Ecclesiastes may be recognised. Certainly, too, we should be cautious in asserting that anything to be found in the discussion from Eccl. i. 2 to xii. 8 expresses the deliberate judgment of the author of Ecclesiastes himself. Some things are manifestly contradictory to others (§ 11); and all is intended to lead up to the exhortations given in the last three verses of the Book.

One principal reason why the connection between Ecclesiastes and the seventy-third Psalm has not been more clearly perceived is to be found, no doubt, in the considerable number of new details which are introduced in Ecclesiastes. While in Eccl. iv. 1 there is an important allusion to the Psalm—to be spoken of directly—the discussion in Eccl. iv. 2-17 is mainly divergent, though still occupied with the moral government of the world. The oppressors in the Psalm "speak wickedly [concerning] oppression (עֲשֹׂק); they speak loftily (*id.* from on high). They set their mouth against (*or* in) the heavens," &c. "And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the



Most High ?" (verses 8, 9, 11). Here the "height" of the oppressors is to be particularly observed, and also their expressed opinion that God regards not their doings. With this in view the analogy in Eccl. v. 8 (7) is scarcely other than decisive :—

"If thou seest in a country the oppression (עֲשֵׂה) of the poor and the perversion of right and justice, marvel not at the matter; for One *higher than the high* observeth, and there are powers *high above them*."

The remarkable transition, also, in Eccl. v. 9 *sqq.*, is easily accounted for if the writer has in view the wealth of the oppressors as described by the Psalmist.

Moreover, it is well worthy of notice that Ecclesiastes suggests an approximate solution of Ps. lxxiii. 10, which has been regarded as one of the most difficult places in the Old Testament. The A. V. translates, "Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full [cup] are wrung out to them." In the light furnished by Eccl. iv. 1, and without resorting to conjectural emendation we may render :—

"Therefore his people (*i.e.*, the officers of the oppressor) smite again, and waters in abundance (*i.e.*, the tears of the oppressed, Eccl. iv. 1) are wrung out from them (*or*, in their case, Sept. ἐν αὐτοῖς)."

If *lamo* is taken as referring back to the smiters we shall then have "and waters in abundance are wrung out *by* them."

It may be added that quite possibly what is said in Eccl. v. of the vanity of dreams was suggested by Psalm lxxiii. 20.

That the attention of the author of Ecclesiastes would be attracted, also, by such compositions as Psalms xxxvii. and xlix. is in every way probable. But, so far as I am aware, there is not in either case evidence at all comparable with that concerning Ps. lxxiii. Professor Cheyne has called Ps. xlix. 12 (13) "a poetic anticipation of Eccl. iii. 18, 19." It would be perhaps better to call the verses in Ecclesiastes a reminiscence of the Psalm. And with some probability a similar remark might be made concerning

Ecc. ii. 14 *sqq.* compared with Ps. xlix. 10 (11), though an objection might be urged on the ground that the matter in question is in no way recondite or remote from common observation.

#### § 10.—ECCLESIASTES AND THE PROPHETS.

KLEINERT contrasts the impress of age which appears on Ecclesiastes with the eternal youth which characterises Prophecy. The prophets have always something new to announce, while for the author of Ecclesiastes there is nothing new under the sun.\* The contrast is not inappropriate, but, nevertheless, we may well regret that we have no explicit information as to the view taken by the author of Ecclesiastes and his philosophical contemporaries concerning the prophets in general, and especially concerning the glowing predictions of the so-called second Isaiah. Did they share in the depression expressed by Haggai (ii. 3), while still looking forward to the glories of the future Israel? There is at least some ground for questioning the assertion that there is no trace in Ecclesiastes of the Messianic hope.

At the end of the eulogium on Elijah in the forty-eighth chapter of Ecclesiasticus (ver. 10, 11) there is an unquestionable reference to the closing words of Malachi's prophecy. No doubt there is some obscurity, but Fritzsche was probably right in the view he took of the concluding words of ver. 11 (*καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ζωὴν ζήσόμεθα*, "for we also shall surely live") as meaning that the author of Ecclesiasticus himself and his contemporaries, whom he addresses, were destined to see in their own lifetime the fulfilment of Malachi's prophecy in the advent of Elijah. This expectation, says Fritzsche, was like that of the first Christian disciples, who hoped to survive till the coming of the Lord.

As we have already seen, Ecclesiastes and Ecclesiasticus are works which come near to one another in point of date. If there is evidence in the latter that the prophecy of

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\* *Der Prediger Salomo*, Berlin, 1864, *Program of the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Gymnasium*.

Malachi was regarded with especial interest by the writer's contemporaries, and that its fulfilment was expected, it can scarcely be surprising to find similar evidence also in the former. There are grounds for thinking that such evidence is to be found in the words of Eccl. v. 6, "Say not before the *malak*, It was an error: why should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands?" In this difficult verse there are two matters especially which require explanation. What is meant by the *malak* (a word which, for the moment, it may be best to leave untranslated)? and why should there be fear lest God's anger at the attempted deception should be shown by "destroying" or "spoiling" (חָצַל) "the work of the hands" of the deceiver? A reasonable answer to both these questions may be drawn from what is to be found in Malachi, if it be supposed that when Ecclesiastes was written the fulfilment of the prophecy contained in the third chapter (so Heb., otherwise third and fourth chapters) was expected. The *malak*, who pretty clearly is to come to the Temple, the house of God, is to be identified with him who is described by the same word in Mal. iii. 1 (מַלְאכִי); and we need not look very far for an explanation of the dreaded destruction or spoiling of the work of the hands. Clearly, on account of the failure to bring to the Temple the offerings due, the people are cursed with a curse (iii. 8, 9), the fruit of their land is devastated, and the vine fails to bring its fruit to maturity (ver. 11). Moreover, the preparation and moral purgation of Israel, which the *malak* was obviously to perform, would naturally involve the punishment of evildoers.

The opinion is *possibly* correct that the *malak* (messenger or angel) of Mal. iii. 1 is to be identified with Elijah the prophet, the sending of whom is predicted in the concluding verses of Malachi, and that it is this *malak* who is alluded to by the author of Ecclesiasticus. The prophecy suggests various questions which it is not necessary here to discuss. What has been said, however, may give reasonable grounds for rejecting the confident assertion that traces of the Messianic hope are entirely lacking in Ecclesiastes.

## § 11.—THE CONTRADICTIONS OF ECCLESIASTES.

OUR book possesses a remarkable antithetical character, its contrasts not unfrequently assuming the form of decided and obvious contradiction. This antithetical character is especially marked in those two great thoughts of the philosophical part of the book — the Stoic, ALL IS VANITY ; and the Epicurean, EAT, DRINK, AND ENJOY. For the sake of further example, I may refer to the contrasted particulars of the Catalogue of Times and Seasons (iii. 2-8) ; to the prudence recommended in chap. x., as compared with the liberality inculcated in chap. xi. ; to the contrast between chap. iv., with its Epicurean or Atheistic tendency, and the apology for the divine administration found in chap. v. ; to the sharp opposition of iii. 16, 17, and iii. 18-21 ; and to the opposed clauses in the famous passage, vii. 16, 17 : “ Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself out exceedingly wise : why shouldest thou be struck with dismay ? Be not wicked overmuch, neither be thou foolish : why shouldest thou die before thy time ? ” Indeed, the book, as a whole, furnishes an example, the larger or philosophical portion standing in decided antithesis to the conclusion, xii. 13, 14, which inculcates the fear of God and obedience to His commandments. One might fancy that the author of Ecclesiastes intended that the contraries of his book should in some sort reflect and image forth the chequered web of man’s earthly condition, hopes alternating with fears, joys succeeded by sorrows, life contrasting with death. It must not be supposed, however, that we can find an adequate explanation in the hypothesis that the author of Ecclesiastes arranged his materials in a varied and artistic manner. Our book does not furnish instances of antithesis only ; there are plain and obvious contradictions, as, for example, that between the Stoic and Epicurean elements of the third chapter.

The recognition of discontinuity or discordance has suggested the idea of a dialogue, the statements of a sceptic being introduced in conflict with the author’s sentiments,

just as in the Epistle to the Romans the Apostle interweaves objections with his argument. Or, again, the book has been regarded as if containing the report of a discussion in a learned or philosophical assembly. The latter view may be considered preferable to the former. The variety of opinions propounded in the book is apparently more considerable than would comport with the idea of a dialogue between two persons. But, in opposition to any such opinion, it must be certainly maintained that we have throughout the book, from the "vanity of vanities" of i. 2 to the "all is vanity" of xii. 8, the "words of Koheleth." If at any time the reader imagines that he can detect indications of another voice, he will probably very soon discover that what seemed so dissimilar was nevertheless part of the teaching of Koheleth. It is Koheleth, for example, who sees wickedness in the place of justice and righteousness, and who concludes that God will judge the righteous and the wicked (iii. 16, 17), and it is Koheleth who concludes that men are but beasts (iii. 18), and who, with regard to man's destiny, asks the question, "Who will bring him to look on what will be after him?" (iii. 22). The continuity of Koheleth's discourse is well illustrated also by the passages vii. 23-28 and x. 5. Thus, then, we have to do with the perplexing phenomenon that varying sentiments and contradictory opinions are uttered by one and the same speaker. We cannot find an adequate explanation in the theory ably propounded by the late Dean Plumptre that we have in the book a record of the author's personal experience.\* With this theory the princely magnificence described in the second chapter—to go no further—is certainly discordant. On the other hand, it is quite possible that Koheleth's experience may represent in part the experience of the author; but if fiction is admitted to be present at all, we cannot draw any entirely safe and trustworthy line between fiction and fact. If, then, it cannot be admitted that the author gives us in the

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\* See especially the "Ideal Biography" which forms the third chapter of the Introduction to his *Ecclesiastes* (Cambridge, 1881).

book a history of his personal experience, or a record of mental oscillations, how are we to account for the perplexing phenomenon which we have before us? for that multiplicity combined with unity which the book presents? The true answer to this question is, I think, to be found in the word *Kohleleth*, which appears at once as the title of the book and as the name of the author, or at least of the author of the philosophical discourse extending as before mentioned, from i. 2 to xii. 8.

### § 12.—THE ANCIENT JEWISH ACADEMIES.

BEFORE, however, attempting to determine the meaning of the name *Kohleleth*, it seems desirable to say a few words on the somewhat obscure subject of the ancient Jewish academies. In its bearing on the origin of Ecclesiastes the subject is too important to be entirely disregarded. Whether the Jewish schools of wisdom and religious learning are to be connected with the prophetic colleges it is not necessary here to determine. Apart from the hypothesis of such connection, it is not difficult to discern causes why there should come to be held assemblies of persons devoted to the study of religious wisdom, and why young men and others desirous of becoming acquainted with this wisdom should connect themselves with these assemblies as learners or disciples. Allusions to schools of wisdom have been supposed to be made in some places in the Book of Proverbs, especially in viii. 1-3, ix. 1-4.\* And, notwithstanding that the scene is laid in "the land of Uz," and apparently at a remote period, the Book of Job may be regarded as in some manner reflecting the discussions in such assemblies, the speeches consisting in considerable part of the dicta and maxims of previous sages (cp. Job xii. 3; xiii. 12). It may be that the author of Job passes in thought from the group of sages in the land of Uz to a larger assembly, when he makes Job say, "I rose up in the congregation (הַקָּהֵל); I cried out" (xxx. 28). Cp. § 13.

Moreover, after the Return from the Captivity, the

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\* See Ewald, *Die sal. Schrift*, pp. 116, 123, 2nd ed.

difference between the language of the sacred books and the popular idiom—whether fully manifested at once, or slowly developed—would encourage the formation of schools or colleges for the initiation or training of the un-instructed in the ancient language and literature. Then those who had made great proficiency in sacred learning would not only be distinguished from others by their superior erudition, but their common knowledge would be to some extent a bond of union. It would seem, however, so far as we have any evidence which can afford direction in the matter, that these *literati* did not merely hold exclusive assemblies, but that they formed a distinct class in more popular assemblies, connected probably more or less closely with the synagogues. In the Mishnah the *Beth Midrash*, or “Academy,” is sometimes distinguished from the *Beth Keneseth*, or “Synagogue” (*Terumoth* xi. 11), and sometimes apparently identified with it (*Shabbath* xvi. 1; xviii. 1). The admissibility of the people to the academies (comp. Luke ii. 45; 1 Cor. xiv. 23) is perhaps a matter of some importance with respect to the probability of so general a designation as *בֵּית דִּין* or *ἐκκλησία* being applied to the institution we are considering.\* This admissibility would not prove, however, that the discourses or discussions were necessarily such as the common people could comprehend (cp. Matt. xiii. 34, 35).

If we do not possess any very direct information as to the constitution of the academies at about the time with which we are at present more particularly concerned, we have at least, in Ecclus. xxxviii. 24 to xxxix. 11, interesting evidence of the existence of a class of *literati* devoted to sacred learning, and following no secular pursuit. It was not, we are told, for the agriculturist, the builder, the engraver, the smith, the potter, however skilful in their craft, to attain “the wisdom of the scribe.” This required seasonable leisure and little distraction through worldly business; so that there might be adequate facility for the

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\* Still there might have been private classes as well as more public meetings. The great Hillel, in his poverty, is said to have been unable to pay the fees required in the time of Shemaiah and Abtalion.

study of ancient lore, for the investigation of enigmatical sayings, for foreign travel, and for careful attention to religious exercises. The duly trained scribe should be qualified to stand before great men and governors. "Peoples shall tell of his wisdom, and the congregation shall utter his praise."

The passage just cited is, in several particulars, of very considerable importance with respect to our present inquiry. How at the time the learned were occupied in the solution of enigmas, and in penetrating into the hidden meaning of proverbial or parabolic sayings (comp. § 1 s.f.) is shown by the language of xxxix. 2, 3: *καὶ ἐν στροφαῖς παραβολῶν συνεισελεύσεται ἀπόκρυφα παροιμιῶν ἐκζητήσει, καὶ ἐν αἰνίγμασι παραβολῶν ἀναστραφήσεται*. Probably, however, the *στροφαὶ παραβολῶν* of ver. 2 are antithetic or responsive philosophic utterances. And the word *συνεισελεύσεται* may be taken as pointing to the learned man coming into the assembly where such exercises were taking place. The words, on this view of them, if regarded as indicating a practice common at the time in assemblies of the learned, would be of very considerable importance with regard to the structure of our book. If a distinction between the *ἀπόκρυφα παροιμιῶν* and the *αἰνίγματα παραβολῶν* is to be made, the former may be taken as comprehending proverbs with two meanings, the true inner and concealed signification belonging to a sphere of thought or action different from that whence the outer dress of language and imagery has been obtained; while the latter expression may be used of parabolic or allegorical stories, like that of the little city and the poor wise man (Eccl. ix. 13-16). In both cases, however, the occupation of the learned man would correspond to what we know of the Rabbinical teachers and scholars of a later day, the "enigmatical parables," representing, indeed, the Haggadic element in the Talmud. Then the existence of such a learned class as that of which the passage from Ecclesiasticus speaks is in accordance with the seemingly contemptuous manner in which in our book worldly and



unphilosophical persons are spoken of (cp. vi. 3-6); just as afterwards the Rabbinical schoolmen spoke of their countrymen outside the schools as mere *גמלי*.

There is not in the passage just cited from Ecclesiasticus any unquestionable reference to *exclusive* assemblies of learned men; and, in addition to what has been said already, we ought to take into account the words of Ecclus. xxxviii. 33, *ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ οὐχ ὑπεραλοῦνται*. These words may be taken metaphorically as alluding to intellectual eminence or to dexterity in academical disputations, which it was not for agriculturists and artizans to attain. More probably, however, if we take into account what follows, *ἐπὶ δίφρον δικαστοῦ οὐ καθιόυνται*, "they shall not sit on the judge's seat," we may suppose, with Grotius, that the writer refers to an actual division in the place where the *ἐκκλησία* assembled. Thus, even then "the chief seats in the synagogue" would be reserved for learned scribes and doctors of the law (cp. Matt. xxiii. 6; Mark xii. 39; Luke xi. 43; xx. 46).

For our present purpose it is not necessary that we should definitely maintain the existence, when our book was written, of exclusive academical assemblies, even if this might be reasonably inferred from the existence of such a class of learned men as that which Ecclesiasticus describes. And the contents of Ecclesiastes—its abstruse and philosophical character, its colloquial manner, its various and conflicting sentiments—all accord with the idea of an assembly of learned men or students of wisdom. And it may be supposed that it was in such assemblies that Simon the Just and Antigonus propounded the dicta ascribed to them in the Mishnah (*Aboth* i. 2, 3). Still the possibility of the unlearned having their own place in the assembly should not be lost sight of (cp. 1 Cor. xiv. 16, 23).

Probably the academies or assemblies were the chief medium through which Greek philosophy and culture were introduced among the Jews. It is not perhaps likely that this result was attained by the admission of Gentile philosophers. Rather may we attribute it to

the return to Palestine of Jews who had been resident among Greek-speaking peoples, and, in accordance with what has been said in the case of Antigonus (§ 7) to foreign travel on the part of members of the academies. The possibility of residence at Alexandria is of course not excluded; but the influence most potent in the production of Ecclesiastes cannot be regarded as Alexandrian, but rather as Palestinian and Rabbinical.

The chief place in Jerusalem where the meetings of the learned were held at the time when Ecclesiastes was written, was, it seems likely, in the Temple precincts (cp. Luke ii. 46). And here probably the priests imbibed those Epicurean sentiments, and that Hellenising spirit, which were destined to issue in such important consequences for Jewish history.

As to the subjects with which the Jewish *literati* concerned themselves in these assemblies, it would seem likely that, in addition to the study of speculative and moral philosophy, there was the handling of Biblical texts in a generalised or philosophical manner. Thus it would appear probable that we have in Eccl. vii. 26 a generalised or allegorical application of the account of Samson and Delilah in Judges xvi. Instead of Delilah and her wiles, we have "the woman who, as to her heart, is nets and snares." The binding of Samson is represented by "whose hands are bonds"; his escape at first, while he retained his Nazariteship, by "he who is pleasing to God will escape from her"; his being taken by the Philistines when his locks had been shorn, and the LORD had departed from him, by "the sinner will be caught by her"; and the words "I find a more bitter thing than death" represent the voluntary death by which Samson finally escapes from Delilah and her pernicious wiles. Similarly v. 1 may be regarded as possibly alluding to Samuel's rebuke of Saul after the defeat of Agag. But, instead of *Saul* not intending to do wrong, we have a general statement with regard to "*fools* offering a sacrifice, though they mean not to do evil." So, also, in vi. 10, *Adam*, "of the earth, earthy"

(cp. 1 Cor. xv. 47), according to the narrative in Gen. ii., is taken to represent the nature of man in general. And probably in the same verse there is a similar generalised application of what is said concerning the antediluvians in Gen. vi. (see note *ad loc.*).

It would perhaps be going too far to assert that natural science was studied in the Jewish schools. But, judging from xii. 1-6, it would seem likely that the tracing of analogies between the condition and life-history of man, and natural and other objects, was pursued to a considerable extent, and that thence resulted another form of allegory.

The contents of Ecclesiastes may be, then, with probability regarded as reflecting the studies and discussions of the Jewish academies at the time when the book was written. And what has been said as to these academies or philosophical assemblies—taking such an assembly as designated by the noun *kahal*—may prepare us for considering the important and much-discussed name KOHELETH.

### § 13.—THE NAME KOHELETH.

THE first occurrence of the name is at the very commencement of the book (i. 1): "The words of Kohēleth, the son of David, king in Jerusalem." In this verse, and generally, the word, notwithstanding its feminine form, is employed as a masculine proper name. It is found once, however, with the article, as though it were an appellative (xii. 8); once, as if a feminine proper name, it appears as the subject of a verb having the feminine termination (vii. 27). Such at least are the phenomena which the text presents according to its ordinary division and pointing.

With respect to the meaning of the name Kohēleth, there is, as it would appear, a considerable agreement of opinion in favour of the interpretation which takes the word as denoting "one who convenes an assembly," though, to the idea of convening, that of calling to or addressing an assembly seems to be not uncommonly added. Some persons probably would give the greater prominence to the

latter idea. In favour of such a view appeal is generally made to the rendering of the Septuagint, *ἐκκλησιαστής*. It should be remembered, however, that the private member, who merely attended, or had the right to attend, the meetings of an *ἐκκλησία*, not less than the orator, might be called an *ἐκκλησιαστής*. Thus, for example, the word is used in Aristotle's *Politics*, iii. 1, where Aristotle speaks of the office of *ἐκκλησιαστής* as pertaining to all citizens as such. The Septuagint, therefore, by thus translating *Koheleth*, gives no adequate support to the opinion that the word denotes "one who addresses an assembly," or, as the Authorised Version gives it, "the Preacher." The fact is, however, worthy of notice, that the Septuagint does certainly connect the word with the idea of an assembly. The authority of this version is accordingly unfavourable to any rendering which excludes this idea; as, for example, "the Compiler." It has been said, also, and with justice, that the verb *קהל* is employed with reference, not to the collecting of *things*, but to the convening or assembling of persons.\*

We have, moreover, the difficulty that *קָהַל* is the participle active *Kal*, and the Old Testament furnishes no example whatever of the use of the *Kal* form of the verb with the sense of convening or assembling, the verb in *Kal* occurring, in fact, only in the word now under consideration. The idea of causing persons to assemble occurs, however, with sufficient frequency in the Old Testament to render it not improbable that, if this idea could have been expressed by the verb *קהל* in *Kal*, some examples of this use would have been found. But in fact we always find, if this verb is used, the Hiphil conjugation employed to express the idea of convening an assembly. We should

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\* Grotius has some acute observations on the meaning of the word, even though he cannot be wholly followed: "Melius forte vertetur *συναθροιστής*, quomodo verbum *קָהַל* per *συναθροίζειν* verti solet, ut intelligamus redactas in hunc librum varias hominum qui sapientes apud suos quisque habebantur opiniones *περὶ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας*: plane sicut liber Jobi omnes ferme quae fuerint aut esse possunt de divina rerum gubernatione aut contra eam sententiam complectitur. Quare mirari non debemus si quaedam hic legimus non probanda," etc.

accordingly have had מְקַהֵל *Makheleth*, and not קֹהֵל *Koheleth*, to denote "one who convenes an assembly," or "the Assembler." The opinion that *Koheleth* has this meaning must therefore be rejected. If we translate *Koheleth* by "the Preacher," we depart still farther from the evidence of the Old Testament. It cannot be admitted that *Koheleth* is one who preaches or lectures, even to a few chosen disciples, "speaking wisdom among the perfect." How then, without departing from the analogy of the language, or disregarding the evidence of the Old Testament, are we to determine the meaning of this important word? In reply it may be said that if מְקַהֵל *Makheleth* would be transitive or causative, meaning "one who convenes an assembly," it would seem natural to regard קֹהֵל *Koheleth* as intransitive, and as meaning "one who is an assembly." If it should be contended that this rendering would require קֹהֵל *Koheleth* to be regarded as a denominative form, there appears no difficulty in the way of supposing that it is such a form, especially if the Kal form of the verb was not otherwise in use. From a grammatical point of view there certainly appears to be nothing whatever to prevent our regarding *Koheleth* as meaning "one who is an assembly," or, taking into account the feminine form, "SHE WHO IS AN ASSEMBLY." Whether this rendering is in other respects reasonable remains to be considered.

The feminine termination of *Koheleth* has been accounted for by regarding *Koheleth* as personified Wisdom רִכְמָה, or by supposing that Wisdom speaks through *Koheleth*. Such a view might well derive some credibility from the personification of Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs (chap. ix.). The author of Ecclesiastes was, we may well believe, familiar with this personification, and it appears not improbable that he had it in view when he formed his conception of *Koheleth*. Still *Koheleth* is not to be identified with the Divine Wisdom of the Proverbs. Wisdom, as there personified, cannot be supposed to indulge, even by way of experiment, in jovial revelry (Eccl. ii. 1), or to advance in knowledge (i. 16), or to utter contradictory

statements. Wisdom, moreover, as exhibited in the Proverbs, is animated by a religious spirit, which does not manifest itself in Koheleth. The wisdom of Koheleth is speculative, and does not begin with "the fear of the Lord." But Koheleth, if not representing perfect and Divine wisdom, may yet be a personification of Wisdom in another sense, in short, of *Philosophy*. Now philosophy may be considered not only as an abstract idea, but also with reference to the several philosophers whose speculations may be embodied collectively under this designation. And it was after this manner that probably Philosophy was conceived of by the author of Ecclesiastes. She was KOHELETH, "She who is an assembly," meaning, as it would seem, not any actual contemporary academy of which our author may have been a member, but rather an ideal assembly of those Jewish philosophers, Stoic, Epicurean, and others, whose opinions were influential at the time when the book was composed. It is, as appears likely, this assembly, this קהל־חכמים, of which, as representing Philosophy, Koheleth is the personification. It may be seen at once that the name Koheleth, thus regarded, is in harmony with both the unity and the multiplicity which characterise Ecclesiastes; with the fact that there is but one speaker from i. 2 to xii. 8, though the sentiments uttered are various, discrepant, and conflicting. There is unity, because Philosophy is everywhere present; there is multiplicity, there is discrepancy, on account of the plurality of philosophers who speak by the mouth of Koheleth.\* Moreover, it is not difficult to see why our author makes Koheleth, as the personification of Philosophy, utter contradictory statements, if it was his intention to warn his readers against philosophical studies (xii. 12), and to teach them that such pursuits were altogether frivolous and vain.

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\* As exemplifying this discordant plurality, I may cite the close proximity and sharp opposition of iii. 17 and iii. 18, both statements beginning with the same formula. As to *real* accordance with what had been said before, see v. 18, "Lo, that is what I have seen," etc. And the וְנָא of viii. 2 may be taken as indicating a different speaker on a new subject. But still, though the plurality is sometimes more clearly manifest, throughout from i. 2 to xii. 8 all is spoken by Koheleth.

And here we should not forget what has been previously said (§ 8) as to the close relation between Ecclesiastes and the Book of Job. It seems not quite unlikely that the author of Ecclesiastes, in forming his conception of *Koheleth*, had in view the assembly of sages with which the Book of Job is concerned, and that, instead of making his philosophers speak individually like those in Job, he resolved to substitute the collective utterance of *Koheleth*.\*

If *Koheleth* is a personification of an assembly of sages or philosophers, it seems natural to suppose that, as in the case of other personified assemblages of men—as, for example, cities and peoples—the name representing the personification would be feminine. And it is especially deserving of attention that, in the prophets, a feminine participle is repeatedly used to designate a collective personification, as יֹשֶׁבֶת "she who inhabits," for inhabitants collectively (Jer. li. 35), and אֹיֶבֶת "she who is an enemy" for enemies collectively (Mic. vii. 8). This usage gives very important evidence in support of the opinion that *Koheleth*, also, denotes a collective personification.

It may be observed, besides that the representation of Philosophy as a personified assembly, as concrete instead of abstract, is in accordance with other phenomena which our book presents. Instead of speaking of *law* in the abstract, *Koheleth* brings before us a *king* (viii. 2). Caution and reverence in treating of the Divine administration are inculcated in the very concrete form, "Take heed to thy steps when thou goest to the House of God" (v. 1). The identification of *Koheleth*, or Philosophy, with Solomon (i., ii.) may be looked upon as a still farther advance in the direction of the concrete, since embodied in the great Hebrew monarch, *Koheleth* attains a more perfect unity. We may understand, moreover, how, if the voice of *Koheleth* is the voice of an assembly, Solomon may be represented

\* With regard to the view that *Koheleth* denotes "an assembly," Knobel has some remarks which are certainly not without interest (*Comm.*, pp. 4, 5), but they certainly give no disproof of the interpretation here given. They are, however, directed against the forms in which this view was presented by Döderlein, Paulus, Nachtigal, Bauer, Bertholdt, and Hartmann, and also the special view of Kaiser.

as speaking in the first and second chapters, though in some other places we may seem to have sentiments suited rather to a private person than to a monarch. Still we ought not perhaps to suppose that, in the philosophical portion of the book, the Solomonic character of Koheleth is entirely dropped after the second chapter, even though it may be comparatively disregarded. If any difficulty should be felt to arise from Solomon being regarded as the mouth-piece of *speculative* philosophy, if it should be thought that the endowments or attainments of Solomon lay rather, according to the history, in other directions, it may be said that, whatever advance in knowledge had been effected since the days of this great monarch, or whatever change had been made in the direction of intellectual activity, Solomon, it would appear, with his surpassing powers, was looked upon as having already anticipated the advance and the change. It may be instructive to the reader to compare 1 Kings iv. 29-34 with the seventh chapter of the Book of Wisdom. Not only are Solomon's attainments in natural science in the latter more extended (ver. 18-20), but the seventeenth verse speaks of an accurate knowledge of the nature of things; of acquaintance with the constitution of the *κόσμος*, and with the operation of the elements. Taking such a passage as that just cited into account, we need find little difficulty in understanding how Solomon might be regarded as including within the range of his comprehensive intellect all the wisdom of the philosophical Koheleth. We may, however, with probability go further than this, and, taking into account the facts both of Ecclesiastes and the Book of Wisdom, may affirm that Solomon was regarded as though the embodiment of all philosophical wisdom: in him Philosophy herself had been enthroned.

On the view which has been thus set forth, it may appear not inexplicable that קהלת should vary in gender, as it does in the ordinary printed text. In the first chapter, where the Solomonic character of Koheleth is prominent, the word is masculine, but afterwards—this cha-



racter not being so much regarded, and Philosophy rather than Solomon speaking—the word becomes feminine (vii. 27). Probably in xii. 8 also we ought to read *אמרה* *קהלת* instead of *אמר הקהלת*, for we may well question the use of *קהלת* with a masculine verb when—as in this case the article would show—the word is not a proper name. The reading of the text may perhaps owe its origin to a desire to assimilate xii. 8 to i. 2, yet without omitting the *ה*. Possibly also the construction with a masculine verb in the next verse (xii. 9) may have had its influence; but for the construction in the ninth verse, a probable reason can be adduced, if we suppose that there is an allusion to the Book of Proverbs, and that thus—the Solomonic character of Koheleth appearing more conspicuous—the word is again determined to the masculine gender.

What has been said above may give the principal reason for the identification of Koheleth with Solomon; but it is by no means impossible that the author of Ecclesiastes may have been influenced by a motive similar to that for which Cicero, in his treatise on Old Age, introduced the elder Cato as the chief speaker, that the discourse might carry with it greater weight and authority, “quo majorem auctoritatem haberet oratio.” This view is not out of harmony with the position that the author intended to warn his contemporaries against the influence of Greek philosophy, as opposed to the ancient faith of Judaism. If, indeed, Greek philosophy was of modern introduction among the Jews, still it would appear, in accordance with what has been already said, that Solomon was looked upon as having anticipated its doctrines and its speculations.

Before closing this Section, reference should certainly be made to the fact that Ibn Ezra, in his comment on Eccl. vii. 3,\* says that a certain interpreter had felt compelled, on account of the incongruities and contradictions of Ecclesiastes, to regard *קהלת* as equivalent to, or resembling *קהלת יעקב*, “the congregation of Jacob” (Deut.

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\* This note of Ibn Ezra's was referred to by Dr. C. Taylor in his article “Ecclesiastes” in the new edition of Smith's *Dictionary*, vol. i.

xxxiii. 4), and that disciples are introduced as speaking, and each giving his own opinion. Ibn Ezra, however, rejects this view, and insists on the unity of Koheleth. He evidently did not see how the unity and multiplicity of Koheleth were to be harmonised.

#### § 14.—THE AUTHOR OF ECCLESIASTES.

THE name of the author of Ecclesiastes is now unknown. In this respect it has already happened with him in accordance with what he himself says of the wise man being forgotten like the fool (ii. 16). Of his profound intellect, however, his book is an enduring monument. One might think that a man of so great intellectual power must have occupied a distinguished position among his contemporaries; but, on the other hand—considering the way in which he speaks, in the ninth chapter, of the “great king” and the “poor wise man”—it seems likely that he did not so speak without having himself suffered from “the proud man’s contumely,” and that it is not without an allusion to his own experience that he tells of the poor man’s wisdom being neglected and despised (ix. 16). Still it is quite possible that he may have been distinguished and honoured among Jewish philosophers, and yet have met with rebuffs from the *profanum vulgus*, or even from such monarchs as Seleucus Callinicus, Antiochus the Great, or Ptolemy Philopator, men who would not improbably have treated with contempt a Jewish philosopher, if chance had brought such a one in their way. But with respect to the details of our author’s life, we are treading on precarious ground. It would appear not improbable, however, that, when his book was written, he had already attained an advanced stage of life. From the general tone of the book, and from the acquaintance with philosophy which it displays, it seems a probable inference that he had been in earlier years a strong adherent of one of the philosophical sects; most likely he had been a Stoic. If so, then, as before said (§ 6), our book must be looked on as a recantation of philosophy. And it is possible that

it is not without an allusion to years which the author had devoted to philosophical speculation that Koheleth says (vii. 15), "I saw all in *the days of my vanity*"; words which should be interpreted in the light of the grand conclusion (xii. 13, 14).

With respect to the place where our author lived, I should certainly incline to the opinion that he dwelt at Jerusalem. The facts of his book would imply that he had lived in the society of advanced thinkers and philosophical students, and that it was mainly for such that he composed his book. On this account we can scarcely assign as his locality any place in Palestine outside of the metropolis.

Allusion has already been made to Ecclus. xxxix. 4, a passage from which it would appear that foreign travel, for the purpose of becoming practically acquainted with the institutions of other countries was by no means uncommon among learned Jews. That the author of Ecclesiastes had conformed to this custom, in order that he might "try things good and things evil among men," is by no means improbable. He may even at Athens have listened to the great teacher Chrysippus discoursing of the Stoic doctrines, though visits to philosophical schools in Asia Minor would be perhaps more likely. The possibility of such travel should not be disregarded, even if the supposition is not absolutely necessary in order to explain that acquaintance with Greek philosophy which our book displays. This possibility of the author's having travelled in foreign countries should be borne in mind, also, in estimating the value, as evidence with respect to the date of the book, of those passages which speak of kings or rulers, or of seemingly contemporaneous circumstances. If the horizon of the author's experience had been thus widened, it is not to be supposed that he must of necessity allude to the condition of Palestine, or to the Court of Egypt or of Syria. And of course, in accordance with what has been already said, we should keep in view also, with regard to such supposed allusions, the character of the book, that it is, in important respects, a work of fiction.

## § 15.—THE THEOLOGY OF ECCLESIASTES.

THOUGH there are clear and conclusive indications of the influence of Greek philosophy on Ecclesiastes, yet, in accordance with what has been already remarked, the indications are not those of pure Stoicism or pure Epicureanism: our author is chiefly concerned with the philosophical opinions which were promulgated in the Jewish schools of his day. The Jewish doctrine of God was held with a firmness and tenacity which resisted even the disintegrating influence of Greek speculation.

The frequent use of the abstract designation of God האלהים *ha-Elohim*, which would, perhaps, be most correctly translated "the Deity," is in accordance with the philosophical character of the book, and with the absence—at least from the greater portion of it—of a theocratic point of view. With this last characteristic also accords the fact that the name *Jehovah* nowhere appears. The absence of the sacred name may possibly be connected with that exaggerated feeling of reverence for this name which was manifested by the later Jews. But with respect, at any rate, to the philosophical portion of the book, i. 2 to xii. 8, we need not take this possibility into account. Cosmopolitanism was a marked characteristic of the post-Aristotelian philosophy, and as this philosophy, to so considerable an extent, speaks through Koheleth, it may have seemed to our author a thing out of place, and incongruous, to put into the mouth of Koheleth the distinctive and localised name of the God of Israel. If in Koheleth's discourse there is no mention of the theocratic name *Jehovah*, still it may seem that some things are spoken of specially connected with the theocracy, as the Temple and vows in v. 1-6. But it is possible to understand this reference figuratively, and as made with the view of inculcating in a veiled and enigmatical manner the duty of caution and reverence in speaking of the Divine administration. Similarly in ix. 2 the words "pure" (טהור) and "defiled" (טמא) may be looked upon as employed in a general or

moral sense. And "he who sacrificeth," in the same verse, need not be regarded as meaning merely an observer of the Levitical law.

If Koheleth regards with favour the post-Aristotelian cosmopolitanism, it cannot be maintained that he surrenders the Jewish conception of God. The nearest approach to such a surrender is to be found in chap. iv. But probably even here the Deity is in the background; and we ought not to forget that in iii. 18, 19, a divine purpose is spoken of in relation to a state of things of which chap. iv. gives a more detailed description. We have nowhere any mention of a society of gods living in disregard of men and their wants. This of course relates to Epicureanism. In the markedly Epicurean passage, v. 18-20, God is represented as apportioning the days of life, and as "making answer" to the joy of heart of him whose life glides away in tranquil pleasures.

With respect to the Stoic doctrine there would be less difficulty in effecting an assimilation with Jewish monotheism; and a very noteworthy example of such assimilation is, in accordance with what has been said already, furnished by the Fourth Book of Maccabees, where the Stoic "reason" has become "the pious reason," trained by the law to complete obedience. Moreover, whatever may be the contradiction involved, Stoicism, though Pantheistic, did not entirely renounce the conception of one supreme personal God, and of supposed inferior or derivative deities the Stoic teachers seem to have taken comparatively small account. With respect to the course of things in the world, the Stoics, since their theory was optimistic, had of necessity to contend with very serious difficulties connected with the existence of physical and moral evil. The manner in which they explained the difficulty we may see, to a remarkable extent, set forth in the seventh chapter of our book. If Koheleth speaks of evil as set by God over against good; of prosperity having been arranged in correspondence to adversity (vii. 14), his teaching but reflects that of the philosophers of the Porch, who looked upon

physical evil as the necessary counterpart of good, and as indispensable to the symmetry and completeness of a well-ordered system of things. Thus, for example, Marcus Aurelius declares that the terrible jaws of the fierce lion, deadly poison, and other noxious things, are not to be regarded with aversion or horror, as though they were monstrous and abnormal, but are to be looked upon as necessarily resulting from the existence of what is fair and beautiful (vi. 36). But Chrysippus, according to Plutarch (*De Comm. Not.* 13), asserted that even vice itself was not useless, but had its legitimate place in the total sum of things; that thus, in fact, virtue could not come into existence without vice; but that there was analogy with the alleged efficacy of some medicaments derived from an admixture of the venom of the serpent and the gall of the hyæna (cp. § 4, p. 18). The Stoic conception may perhaps be illustrated by the idea of a building constructed of many parts corresponding to and fitting into each other, some being protuberant, and others in consequence hollow or indented.\*

Besides, seeming ills and adverse outward circumstances were supposed to be necessary for the due training and exercise of man's moral powers. These circumstances, rightly used, may be made subservient to the wise man's highest advantage. It is in accordance with this teaching that Koheleth recommends that the house of mourning should be visited; that patience under reproach and adversity should be exercised, since he who fears God will come forth from all the trials to which he is subjected. It is for fools to indulge, under untoward circumstances, in irritation and anger (vii. 2-18). And if the Stoics, notwithstanding difficulties which they were unable adequately to solve, still taught that no evil could really happen to the wise man, and that this was possible only in the case of the vicious (cp. Marc. Aurel. ix. 16), Koheleth declares,

\* The influence of the Stoic doctrine in the matter just treated of appears clearly manifest also in Ecclus. xxxiii. 13-15 (cf. § 3), and in xlii. 24, 25: παντὰ δισσὰ ἐν κατέναντι τοῦ ἐνός, καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησεν οὐδὲν ἐκλείπον. ἐν τοῦ ἐνός ἐσπερέωσεν τὰ ἀγαθὰ, καὶ τίς πλησθήσεται ὁρῶν δόξαν αὐτοῦ; cp. xxxiii. 14, ἀπέναντι τοῦ κακοῦ τὸ ἀγαθόν, κ.τ.λ.

"Although the sinner doeth evil a hundred times, and prolongeth his days, yet surely I know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. But it will not be well with the wicked man, neither will he lengthen out his days like the shadow, because he feareth not before God" (viii. 12, 13).

As to the degree and the extent of the moral depravity of mankind, there is a remarkable accord between the teaching of the Stoics and that of Koheleth. According to Plutarch (*De Stoic. Repugn.* 31), even the great Chrysippus, who came so near to the fountain head of Stoical wisdom, neither professed that he himself was really good (*σπουδαῖον*), nor that he had discovered this goodness in any of his disciples or teachers. "We are all wicked," says Seneca, "we have been wicked; we shall be wicked."\*

Similarly, Koheleth declares, "There is not a righteous man on earth who doeth well, and sinneth not. Moreover, do not pay attention to all the words which people speak, lest thou hear thy servant reviling thee; for thy heart knoweth that thou, even thou, hast many times also reviled others" (vii. 20-22). If Koheleth could only find "one man out of a thousand" (vii. 28), the Stoics, we are told, declared most men wicked, but talked of there having been one good man, and perhaps a second, as though a good man were a strange and unnatural animal, rarer than the phoenix (Alex. Aphrod. *De Fato*, 28). And further, if Koheleth ascribes human depravity to man himself, seeing that "God had made man upright" (vii. 29), Cleanthes, in his hymn to Zeus, declares that nothing in earth, or sea, or sky, is done without Zeus,—

Πᾶν ὁπόσα βέζουσι κακοὶ σφετέρῃσιν ἀνόλως.

But of the incongruity or contradiction in which the Stoics were thus involved it is unnecessary to say more in this place.

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\* "Omnes mali sumus. Quidquid itaque in alio reprehenditur, id unusquisque in suo sinu inveniet . . . Mali inter malos vivimus" (*De Ira.* iii. 26, § 4). "Peccavimus omnes, alii gravia, alii leviora . . . Nec delinquimus tantum, sed usque ad extremum aevi delinquemus" (*De Clem.* i. 6, § 2).

A word must be here interposed with regard to the doctrine of our book concerning the immortality of the soul, a matter with respect to which some special interest has been manifested. Certainly it would appear that, in the essentially Epicurean passage iii. 18-22—whether we take the  $\pi$  of verse 21 as the article or as the interrogative—this immortality is, in accordance with the true Epicurean doctrine, altogether denied. In ix. 5-10—a passage still essentially Epicurean—we have probably a conception of the dead as inert and feeble shades dwelling in Sheol (cp. ver. 10 and xi. 8). But this departure from the true Epicurean doctrine, if such departure there be, admits of easy explanation on the supposition that our author is dealing with opinions promulgated in the contemporary Jewish schools. And, in general, with regard to philosophical discrepancies, we should not forget that it was, in all probability, our author's intention to set forth, by way of warning, the fluctuating and discrepant sentiments propounded by contemporary philosophers (§ 11).

In essentially Stoical passages, also, we ought probably to recognise a want of agreement concerning the doctrine of immortality, reflecting in part that which, according to the ancient authorities, existed among the Stoics. It may be regarded as the more orthodox Stoic doctrine that the souls of all men survive for a longer or shorter period; those of the good and virtuous till the great world-conflagration, but those of the foolish and wicked for a shorter time only, during which they are subjected to punishment in Hades. It would seem, however, according to Arius Didymus in Eusebius (*Praep. Evang.* lib. xv. p. 68, ed. Gaisford), that some Stoics taught that the souls of men are mingled at death with the Deity, the World-Soul (*Ἐνιοὶ δὲ τὴν μὲν τοῦ ὅλου, αἰδίου· τὰς δὲ λοιπὰς συμμύγνυσθαι ἐπὶ τελευτῇ εἰς ἐκείνην*). Expressing, as seems probable, this latter doctrine, we have the passage Eccl. xii. 7, which speaks of "the dust returning to the earth as it was, and the spirit returning unto God who gave it." If we understand the last clause of the verse as denoting the re-absorption



of the soul into the Deity, there is then a congruity with the first clause, which points to the dissolution of the body and to its particles mingling again with the earth. On the other hand, the idea of individual immortality, so far as respects the soul surviving death, probably underlies iii. 17, which tells of God "judging the righteous and the wicked," and viii. 7, 8, which it seems best to understand of the fears of the sinner with regard to the future, and to certainly approaching death. It may be well here to observe that, though xii. 14, the last verse of the book, possibly implies the idea of individual immortality, yet that probably its primary intention was rather to point towards a future vindication of God's moral government, and the revelation of what is now hidden and mysterious with reference thereto. But it should never be forgotten that verses xii. 9-14 are to be sharply distinguished from what precedes, even when an identity of authorship is maintained. The discourse of Kohēleth and the philosophical portion of the book end with xii. 8.

Notwithstanding such explanations of the state of things in the world as Kohēleth was able to offer, he declares that he found it impossible to discover any scheme to which, from a moral point of view, man's condition could be seen to conform. This scheme was "far off and exceedingly deep; who could find it out?" (vii. 24). Even the wise man is foiled when he thinks to understand the work which is being done under the sun (viii. 17). The discovery of what God is doing in the world, or what He intends, it was entirely beyond the philosopher's power to attain.

#### § 16.—KOHĒLETH'S ALLEGORY OF OLD AGE.

IN the title of this section I might, perhaps, have used the word "senility" instead of "old age," for clearly, in xii. 2-6, Kohēleth does not discourse of the "*prima ac recta senectus*." He is telling of "days of evil," and days when pleasure has departed, in strong contrast to the days of the bright sunshine of youth and enjoyment (xi. 7, 8). The description is not to be understood of old age rendered

decrepid and imbecile by previous excess. If Koheleth gives on the whole a dark and unfavourable view of the close of human life, this is in accordance with other phenomena which the book presents. The dominant interpretation of xii. 2-6, which regards the passage as generally allegorical, must be accepted. Dr. Charles Taylor has called the interpretations of Michaelis and of Umbreit and Ginsburg "semi-literal renderings." Both involve the idea of allegory.\* According to the former the approach of Death is described under the figure of the approach of Night. The latter interpretation holds the conception to be that of a threatening tempest. With reference to this latter view it may be said, without going into further detail, that the description of death itself as the dust returning to the earth, and the spirit returning to God who gave it (ver. 7) is far too placid to admit of easy reconciliation with the idea of a violent storm. If the view of Dr. Taylor that verses 2-5 are "a literal dirge" were adopted, this would not necessarily involve the entire absence of allegory.

The so-called or mis-called "anatomical rendering" must be accepted, not only on account of its inherent probability, but also with reference to its agreement with that tendency towards Rabbinism which our book presents. That throughout the verses in question perfect and undeviating consistency is maintained need not be asserted. And it is not necessary to defend the absurd or repulsive explanations of detail given by some interpreters. These may be passed over without discussion; and it would be superfluous to repeat here the interpretation given in the Exegetical Analysis.

There is, however, a matter of which some notice should be taken. It is of importance with regard to the general theory of Greek influence, and also with respect to the interpretation of the difficult verse xii. 6. This verse is rendered both by A. V. and R. V., "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern." R. V., however, gives in the margin as an alternative

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\* *The Dirge of Koheleth*, sect. III.

rendering for "loosed," "snapped asunder." If, with regard to the word thus rendered, we accept the Kethib, and point the verb as Kal, we have קטף! This, taken in a sense analogous to that of Hiphil, "to go far," "to make length," brings us to an explanation like that of Zöckler, *discessit, longe recessit* ("gives way"). Prof. Tayler Lewis, in his appended note on this place, remarks that there is "a passage of some length in the *Timæus*, extending from 70 B, to 76 E, containing quite a full description of the more vital internal parts and their uses, with some things much resembling what we find here. . . . Solomon's golden bowl, too, is suggested, when we read in the *Timæus* how the *θεῖον σπέρμα*, the 'divine seed' of life was moulded into a round shape, and made the *ἐγκέφαλος*, or brain: and there are other things about the fluids, and their *περίοδοι*, or circulations, that call up what is here said about the wheel and the fountain. Neither is there to be ridiculed and wholly rejected the idea which some have entertained that Solomon referred to the circulation of the blood."

When Prof. Tayler Lewis thus wrote, the evidence which we now have of Greek influence had been for the most part not yet adduced. Now, however, we can look at the matter from a different point of view. It would be going too far to say that the author of Ecclesiastes had before him the anatomical and physiological discussion in the *Timæus*. Without affirming this, it may be said, with some confidence, that in xii. 6 there are pretty clear traces of Greek influence, direct or indirect. It is a noteworthy fact that, towards the end of *Timæus* 81, it is said that at last, when in old age, through the conflict and strain of life, the constituent parts of the marrow suffer dissolution, the soul naturally flies away with pleasure (*τέλος δὲ, ἐπειδὴν τῶν περὶ τὸν μυελὸν τριγώνων οἱ ξυναρμοσθέντες μηκέτι ἀντέχουσι δεσμοὶ τῷ πόνῳ διεσταμένοι, μεθίσαι τοὺς τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῶν δεσμοὺς, ἣ δὲ λυθείσα κατὰ φύσιν μεθ' ἡδονῆς ἐξέπτατο*). The "marrow" (*μυελὸν*) has been regarded as meaning specially the spinal cord. Possibly the question might be raised whether, while including the cord, the word has not

a more extended meaning. A comparison, however, of what is said in 73 gives weight to the conclusion that, in the quotation just made, it is the spinal cord to which there is especial reference. With the brain the Creator connected the divine soul, more lit. "seed" (τὸ θεῖον σπέρμα), but with the round and prolonged substance (στρογγύλα καὶ προμήκη), which we may understand of the medulla oblongata and the cord, he connected the mortal soul. Moreover, to these were fastened, as with anchors, the bonds of the entire soul (βαλλόμενος ἐκ τούτων πάσης ψυχῆς δέσμους). From this we may explain the δεσμοὶ preceding. But in the decay of old age it is not merely these "bonds" which give way, the "triangles" internal to and constituting the marrow are separated (διαίρεται, 81): "the cord gives way." We may thus come with probability to the conclusion that we have not only a remarkable analogy with what is said in Eccl. xii. 6, but that we may thence derive important assistance towards determining the true sense of the first clause in the passage just indicated.

We come next to the golden bowl or globe (כֶּהָאֵלֶּה), which may easily recall Plato's περὶ μὲν τὸν ἐγκέφαλον αὐτοῦ σφαῖραν περιετόρνενυσεν ὁστέϊνην (73), though, so far as I know, there is nothing in Plato about "shattering the bowl." It is clear, however, that the author of Ecclesiastes does not servilely copy Plato, whatever may be the just view of the relation of one to the other. Then the imagery of a spring (צִיבִיּוֹן) from which water is drawn answers well to ὅλον ἐκ κρήνης ἐπ' ὀχετοὺς ἐπὶ τὰς φλέβας ἀντλοῦν αὐτὰ (79 A). Again, a little further on (79 B), the course of things in the human organisation is compared to a revolving wheel (ὅλον τροχοῦ περιεγόμενον), the τροχός answering to the כֶּהָאֵלֶּה of our passage. On this evidence it may be reasonably contended that there is a reflection of Greek thought—however modified—in this place in Ecclesiastes. Moreover, the physiological method of interpretation, which, in principle, so many interpreters have accepted, is confirmed, and we may infer that, as in the *Timæus*, so in our book,

there is indicated some notion of the circulation of the blood or vital fluid.

I may add here, with reference to a previous verse (Eccl. xii. 5), I do not feel able to adopt the opinion that in what is said of the דגב, שקר, and אכילת, there is a veiled allusion to that failure of the reproductive function common in advanced age. I doubt the possibility of making the language employed square with such an opinion; and it is noteworthy that the last part of the verse does not speak of commencing decrepitude, but of "man going to his everlasting home," &c. Still it must, I think, be admitted that such a figurative description of the matter in question would not be alien from the Rabbinical mode of speaking. Thus in the tract *Niddah* v. 7, a woman, at different periods of life, is spoken of as an unripe fig, a ripening fig, and a fig fully ripe: And, with respect to matters pertaining to women, we have (*Niddah* ix. 11) the figure of different species of vines, one of which yields black and another red wine, while of one the wine is scanty and of another abundant. The vine which yields no wine is spoken of as the vine of *Dorkati*, a word which is regarded as derived from דור "generation," and קטיע "cut off." Comp. also *Niddah* ii. 5.

#### § 17.—THE EPILOGUE.

A POINT in the inquiry has now been attained at which it may be convenient to notice some important questions relating to the so-called "Epilogue" (xii. 9-14)—a designation to the entire fitness of which I should, however, demur, though for the sake of convenience I may be allowed to employ it. The view which has been already suggested (§ 6) necessarily assumes that the verses in question are an integral part of the book, and not a sort of appendix, without which the larger portion of the book (i. 2—xii. 8) would still be essentially complete. If the larger portion of the book possessed a distinctly negative character; if its intention was to set forth the vain and unsatisfying nature of philosophical studies, as well as the discrepant and contradictory conclusions which different philosophers had

drawn from the same facts, it may well seem fitting, in order to the completeness of the book, that some distinctly positive utterance should follow. It may thus be with probability concluded that the Epilogue is an integral part of the book, and that it was intended to turn away the reader's attention from philosophical speculations concerning man and his condition, to Authority and Faith; to the fear of God and the observance of His commandments, in the expectation that what seemed abnormal would yet be shown to be right, and that the justice of the Divine administration would be made in the future clearly manifest. With this view the words of the twelfth verse seem entirely congruous: "And further, be admonished, my son, by these: as to the making of many books there is no end; and much close study is a wearying of the flesh." The words rendered "be admonished," *הִזְהִיר*, might be translated, "be warned" (comp. iv. 13 and Ezek. xxxiii. 4-6); and it is thus quite suitably used, if the Epilogue was written with the intention just indicated. And the reasonableness of this view may be still more apparent, if we consider what it is against which the warning is directed—the endless making of books and that close study which is a wearying of the flesh. It would thus be implied that no reading and study, however intent, no multiplication of books, however skilfully they might be composed, would avail to solve the great problems arising from the earthly condition and the moral nature of man.

We have next to notice the plural expressions *דברי חכמים*, "words of wise men" (ver. 11) and *מהמה* "by these" (ver. 12), expressions which have been supposed to refer to the several books making up the Hagiographa, and to be in accordance with the opinion that the Epilogue was not written by the author of Ecclesiastes with special reference to the work which he was bringing to a conclusion, but that it was composed by the collector of the Hagiographa, with the view of making a suitable conclusion to the collected books, of which it is considered (without evidence) that Ecclesiastes was the last. But the

idea of the Epilogue being a general conclusion to the collected Hagiographa seems a little out of harmony with the special mention of Koheleth in ver. 9, "And moreover, since Koheleth was wise, he still further taught the people knowledge," etc. It is clear that this does not allude to the collected Hagiographa. And then, as to the plural expressions referred to, it may be said that they quite agree with the idea of "an assembly" as involved in the name Koheleth, in accordance with the interpretation previously given (§ 13): If the author of Ecclesiastes had been giving the views of various philosophers concerning human life, he might quite naturally speak of the "words of wise men," and say, "Be warned, my son, by these."

There is another expression in the eleventh verse, בעלי אספור, which it may be well here to notice. This phrase has been rendered, "masters of assemblies" or "members of assemblies." But such a rendering seems to imply that sufficient regard has not been given to the evidence concerning the meaning of אספור furnished by the word אספיים, which denotes, not *assemblies of persons*, but *collections of things*, or *stores*, as may be seen by referring to the passages 1 Chron. xxvi. 15, 17; Neh. xii. 25. The phrase in question, then, בעלי אספור, may accordingly be taken to mean "men of collections." But "collections" of what? Taking the context into account, it seems not difficult to reply to this question, *collections of the words of wise men*, that is to say, collections of proverbs and of such other utterances as might be included under the comprehensive word *meshalim*. Now, as we are told in verse 9 that Koheleth "set in order" or arranged *meshalim*, it would appear that Koheleth was to be ranked among the "men of collections"; and, in this particular, probably the Solomonic character of Koheleth was especially regarded. Moreover, the word "collections" agrees entirely with the conclusion as to the composite character of Ecclesiastes already indicated. It may be observed, also, that the tenth chapter of our book especially, would be in accordance with such a view. This chapter appears manifestly to consist of

separate dicta, having for the most part a proverbial cast. It may be added that the fact that, on careful examination, a connecting thought may be found running through the whole chapter is in accordance with Koheleth's setting *in order*, or arranging *meshalim*.

Evidence in favour of the interpretation of *baale asuppoth* which has just been given, may be obtained also from the words of Ecclus. xxxiii. 16 (a verse to which reference has been previously made, § 3), in which the Son of Sirach speaks of himself as having "been awake last of all, as one that gleaneth after the grape-gatherers." The collectors of *meshalim* are here metaphorically spoken of as "grape-gatherers"; and it would appear that several, probably many, such had preceded the Son of Sirach. Taking into account what has been said (§ 5) as to the respective dates of Ecclesiasticus and Ecclesiastes, the words just quoted may be regarded as of some importance in relation both to the composition of Ecclesiastes and the meaning of the words *baale asuppoth*.

There remains, however, a question of very great importance concerning the Epilogue: What is the relation of the concluding verses, xii. 13, 14, to the rest of the book? That these verses contrast with what precedes is easily seen. But to affirm, without external evidence, that we have here a trace of a later hand, is to rush to a far too hasty conclusion. An entirely reasonable explanation (in accord with what has been already said) is possible. Our author, having set forth the fruitlessness of philosophical investigation by exhibiting the contradictions in which such study had resulted, concludes by giving the positive lesson for which the previous discourse was intended to prepare the reader.

An objection may, however, be drawn from the seeming disproportion which would thus arise between the extended philosophical discourse (i. 2 to xii. 8), and the brief religious exhortation of xii. 13, 14. And it may be said that Koheleth's presentation of philosophic doctrines is characterised by too much of impressiveness, by too intense



earnestness and self-devotion, to allow of our thinking that his intention was merely to warn his readers against philosophical study, and then to recommend the sacrifice of the intellect. If he had been an enemy of all philosophical study, he would not have sent forth his philosophical arguments like brazen knights in armour of dazzling brightness, in order that he might come at last to so poor a conclusion, and one, moreover, which he himself had previously done so much to contradict and refute.\*

These objections may seem at first sight of no small weight. But with regard to the vivid interest seemingly manifested in philosophical speculations this may be accounted for, if the author of *Ecclesiastes* had previously been a warm adherent of one of the philosophical sects. With respect to the seeming contrast between the conclusion of *Ecclesiastes* and what precedes, attention should be especially given to what has been said (§ 8) on Job xxviii. 28. A further answer is, however, to be found in what may be called the Rabbinical tendency of *Ecclesiastes*. Quite in accordance with this tendency are the characteristics of the language, on which something more will be said in the sequel. Closely connected, as the book appears certainly to have been, with the learning of the Jewish schools, it shows in its language—to an extent exhibited by no other of the Biblical books—an affinity with the Hebrew of the Mishnah. The Talmudists delight, apparently, to surprise the reader by a sudden transition, and to task his ingenuity in discerning a subtle thread of connection. The late Emanuel Deutsch observed, in his celebrated essay on the Talmud, “We can understand the distress of mind in a mediæval divine, or even in a modern *savant*, who, bent upon following the most subtle windings of some scientific debate in the Talmudical pages—geometrical, botanical, financial, or otherwise—as it revolves round the Sabbath journey, the raising of seeds, the computation of tithes and taxes—feels, as it were, the ground

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\* So Prof. Siegfried in a review of the first edition of this work in Hilgenfeld's *Zeitschrift*.

suddenly give way, the loud voices grow thin, the doors and walls of the schoolroom vanish before his eyes, and in their place uprises Rome the Great, the Urbs et Orbis, and her million-voiced life. Or the blooming vineyards round that other City of Hills, Jerusalem the Golden herself, are seen, and white clad virgins move dreamily among them."\* The transition in Ecclesiastes is of a different nature; but it cannot be allowed that we are justified in regarding the closing verses of the book as a poor conclusion.

A tolerably good example of the Talmudic tendency to check philosophical investigation, and "sacrifice the intellect" is furnished by *Chagigah* ii. 1. Here the Mishnist not only refers to some things which are either not to be discussed at all, or which are to be spoken of with great caution,† but mentions also four matters which are not to be investigated or considered. If anyone should depart from this rule, it would have been better that he had not come into the world. The four matters to which reference is made are, what is above, what is below, what is before, and what is after. He who investigates these matters, and detracts from the glory of his Maker (וכל שלא חס על כבודו) it would have been better that he had not come into the world. What is here said is, of course, not identical with the conclusion of Ecclesiastes. Moreover, the Mishnist may be said to inculcate an exaggerated reverence. Nevertheless there is essentially a remarkable resemblance to what is to be found in Ecclesiastes; and thus, in what may be called the Rabbinical tendency of our book, we may find a reasonable solution of the difficulty which presents itself on a comparison of the concluding verses with what had preceded.

We may assert, then, that the Epilogue is an integral part of the book; that the author intended to give therein

\* The last allusion is pretty clearly to the closing section of *Taanith*, where the virgins of Jerusalem go out of the city, and dance among the vines, calling upon the youths to make careful choice of a wife. "Moving dreamily" among the vines is not quite the idea of the Mishnist; but this does not affect the main question here.

† These are incest, the creation of the world, and the chariot of Ezekiel's vision.

a hint with regard to the structure of his work, as containing the opinions and dicta of various philosophers and sages ; to offer a warning against fruitless speculation, and, especially, to set forth the great positive conclusion towards which it was intended that the readers of the book should be directed and urged, as by goads given out from the one Shepherd.

#### § 18.—THE STYLE AND DICTION.

It has not been uncommon to regard the language of Ecclesiastes as furnishing the chief argument against the Solomonic authorship. Thus Grotius, to whom is ascribed the merit of having, after Luther, shown the way to a more correct view of the origin of the book: "*Ego tamen Solomonis esse non puto, sed scriptum serius sub illius Regis, tanquam pœnitentia ducti, nomine. Argumentum ejus rei habeo multa vocabula quæ non alibi quam in Daniele, Esdra, et Chaldæis interpretibus reperias.*" And, unquestionably, a powerful argument may be derived from the language in support generally of the late origin of the book. The date of the book has already, however—so I venture to think—been determined with a definiteness of result (§ 5) such as no argument derived from the diction is likely to yield. So far, then, as respects the date, it may be sufficient if the language of the book is not out of harmony with the conclusion which has been already attained.

The diction of Ecclesiastes is entirely in accordance with what has been said before as to the close connection of the book with the Jewish academies. When Hebrew had ceased to be the language of ordinary communication among the common people, it was still employed in the schools as the "language of the learned," acquiring at the same time various peculiarities which distinguish it from the early idiom. Ecclesiastes stands alone among the Biblical books in the approach which it makes to the Hebrew of the Jewish colleges, as this is exemplified in the Mishnah. The difference is still, no doubt, considerable ; but, to explain this difference, we have to take into account

the wide interval which elapsed between the composition of Ecclesiastes and the redaction of the Mishnah. The resemblance, however, is marked and striking.\* Thus we have Mishnic words and phrases, or those which are essentially such, and which we find nowhere else in the Old Testament. Thus we find שָׁדֵחַ, חִיץ מִן, עֲנֵן (ii. 8, note) בָּקֵר, בֶּן חֲרִיִּים. Other words found in our book have acquired, or are tending towards a Mishnic sense; as the Niph. of מַעֲשֶׂה, עֲשֶׂה (i. 9, 14, notes), עֵלָם (iii. 11), נוֹלֵךְ (iv. 14, note), הִכְשִׁיר (x. 10, note), אֵי זֶה, without reference to place (xi. 6). Similar indication is given by the wider and more general sense of צִשִּׁיר (x. 6, 20), and probably other words (see note on x. 16); by the use of the suffix pronoun with reference to an antecedent implied only, and not fully expressed (iv. 12 *al.*) and, passing over other indications, generally by the abrupt, concise, and elliptical style which characterises our book. The author of Ecclesiastes, it may be said, probably wrote in just such Hebrew as was commonly heard in the schools in his day.†

The influence which the philosophic character of our book had on its diction should certainly not be overlooked. Though, in accordance with what has been said, we may

\* Dr. C. Taylor (Smith's Dict., vol. i. New Ed. art. "Ecclesiastes") observes, that "its use of ELOHIM differentiates Qoheleth from later and non-canonical Jewish writings." This, however, is not inconsistent with the position that the book was written in the Hebrew of the schools, the Rabbinical Hebrew of the author's days.

† Ginsburg is deserving of commendation for having, in the Introduction to his *Cohleth* (1861), spoken of the book as written in Rabbinical Hebrew: "And if it could be shown that the Old Testament canon was not closed till after that time (350-340 B.C.), the language and complexion of the book would fully justify us in assigning it to a much later period" (p. 255). Ginsburg thus went beyond what had been said by Knobel in his commentary on Ecclesiastes (1836), who expressed a doubt whether it could be asserted that Rabbinisms had been found in the book. Still, he considered that transitions of the Hebrew to the Talmudic language could be traced, and such as could be found in no other book of the Old Testament. Knobel was inclined, with regard to the date, towards the opinion of De Wette, that it was at the end of the Persian or the beginning of the Macedonian period (*Comm.* pp. 73, 94). If the language of Ecclesiastes is said to be "Rabbinical Hebrew," the expression may be understood in accordance with what is said above.

It is unnecessary to transcribe here the lists of later Hebrew forms given by Delitzsch and Wright. And reference may also be made to the section on "Grammatical Peculiarities of the Book," given by the latter (p. 488). I may mention also Siegfried's treatment of this matter in his recently published Commentary.

maintain that our author probably used, for the most part, such Hebrew as was commonly employed in the schools in his time, yet this is not out of harmony with the supposition that he strove earnestly to give the new philosophic ideas a fuller expression and embodiment, wrestling, as Ewald has it (*Die sal. Schrift.* 2nd ed., p. 270), with the Hebrew language, in order that he might mould it into an instrument fitted for his purpose. We may thus compare our author with Lucretius, in the difficulty which the great Roman poet tells us that he experienced,—

“Propter egestatem linguæ et rerum novitatem.”

And the twenty-fifth verse of the seventh chapter may be cited as a specially pertinent example of what has just been said.

Objection has been made, however, on the ground that peculiar and prominent words of the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies are inadequately represented in our book, or are altogether absent. Thus we read in Cheyne's *Job and Solomon*, p. 264: “Are there any traces of Stoic terminology? That terminology varied, no doubt, within certain limits, and could not be accurately reproduced in Hebrew. Still, even under the contorted forms of expression to which a Hebrew writing Stoic or semi-Stoic might be driven, we could hardly fail to recognise the familiar Stoic expressions, *εἰμαρμένη*, *πρόνοια*, *φαντασία*, *φύσις*, *φρόνησις*, *ἀρετή*. The Septuagint version ought to help us here.” That the Hebrew of Ecclesiastes contains expressions corresponding to these Greek words is not to be asserted. In part, at least, these words are alien from the Hebrew mode of thought. If we except *εἰμαρμένη* and *φύσις*, the other words mentioned are to be found in various places of the Septuagint version, *φρόνησις* more frequently, but *πρόνοια*, *φαντασία*, and *ἀρετή* sparsely. But, in the places where these words occur, the Hebrew of the original diverges so widely from the Greek, that if any of the Hebrew words had been employed by the author of Ecclesiastes to represent the Greek expressions mentioned, probably in no case could the Greek word have been detected lying

beneath. The Concordance supplies a good answer to such an objection as that mentioned. Moreover, with the exception of *εἰμαρμένη*, all the words mentioned occur in the New Testament; but the devices resorted to by translators of the New Testament into Hebrew may show the difficulty or impracticability which the words presented. It is certainly not for us to say that the author of Ecclesiastes should have adopted a method similar to that common in Syriac, and have given the Greek words in Hebrew letters. Such transliteration would probably have been inconsistent with the object he had especially in view. And, in accordance with what was said before, it should not be forgotten that the author of Ecclesiastes is not concerned with pure Stoicism, or with pure Epicureanism, as these systems were taught in Athens or any other Greek city. He deals with the philosophical opinions promulgated in the Jewish schools of his day; and the influence on these opinions of both Stoicism and Epicureanism, whether exercised directly or indirectly, is unmistakable.\*

What has just been said does not preclude the possibility of there being other indications of Greek influence on the diction of Ecclesiastes. Zirkel and Graetz (Graetz, *Kohélet*, p. 179 sq.) have adduced various supposed instances of Graecism, the majority of which may be regarded as not entirely satisfactory, especially when considered apart from other evidence of Greek influence. It may, however, be considered quite probable that *קָלוֹס* in Ecc. v. 18 reflects the Greek *καλός*, though it may seem not impossible that the word might have acquired the sense it bears independently of the Greek. A similar remark may be made with regard

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\* An answer is thus given, also, to the objection made by Zeller, with reference to the first edition of this work, that the correspondences with Stoicism and Epicureanism are much too indefinite, and that there is too great a lack of the ideas, principles, and leading words (*Schlagwörter*) of these systems for the proof of a direct connection with Ecclesiastes (um für einem direkten Zusammenhang mit denselben etwas zu beweisen). He admits, however, that it is quite possible that the author of the book may have been influenced (*berührt*) by Greek culture, and that Ecclesiastes may contain thoughts which had their origin with the philosophers (*Gesch. der Phil. der Griech.* Theil 3, Abth. 2, p. 257, 3rd ed.). It may thus be seen that Zeller goes a long way towards conceding what is required. And now very important additional evidence is presented.

to the varied use of the same word in the Mishnah (see iii. 11, note). But it seems preferable on the whole to admit that we probably have, in the passage cited, a genuine example of Greek influence. A still better example, and one which seems tolerably certain, is found in the עשור טוב of iii. 12—a phrase which Zirkel took as equivalent to εὖ πράττειν. No other explanation seems at all admissible. To these examples must be added the very remarkable use of קפל in xii. 13, an expression which appears quite inexplicable, unless it be regarded as reflecting τὸ καθόλου or τὸ ὅλον of the Greek philosophers (see note *ad loc.* and § 4, p. 11). There is, besides, the repeated employment of plural nouns with a singular verb (i. 10, note); a usage which, as found in our book, may have resulted from the author having in his mind, or attempting to imitate, the well-known construction in Greek of a neuter plural noun with a singular verb. Thus we may find an explanation of the singular verbs in x. 1, and with respect to ii. 7, we have a close parallel in Greek (see note *ad loc.*). These examples are comparatively few, no doubt, but, to an argument against the validity of those adduced derived from this paucity, an answer may be made in the words of M. Henri Bois : “Le petit nombre d’idiotismes grecs relevés par les critiques n’est pas un argument sérieux contre la réalité de ces idiotismes.”\*

Whether we do or do not agree with Ewald in the high eulogy which he passed on the artistic skill displayed by the author of Ecclesiastes in his style and diction, we may well be cautious—especially with xii. 10 before us—how we bring against him the charge of writing in a mean and inelegant manner. His art may be of a high order, even if not always, and altogether, identical with that of earlier writers.

Ewald points to the way in which our author plays artistically upon words, adducing as examples שָׁמַן and שָׁם in vii. 1 and סִירִים and סִיר in vii. 6. It is worthy of notice, too, how also in the seventh chapter, having in view

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\* *Essai sur les Origines de la Philosophie Judéo-Alexandrine*, p. 57.

probably the root-meaning of the word, he uses פָּצַח in two different senses; so that, at first sight, vii. 3 and vii. 9 seem contradictory (see note on vii. 9). From what has just been said, possibly some light may be thrown on the difficult word יְהוֹלֵל which, it is particularly deserving of notice, occurs also in this same seventh chapter in close proximity to the passages just now cited. The context seems certainly to require that the verb in question should be taken in vii. 7, in some such sense as "gives lustre to" or "causes to shine forth" (see note *ad loc.*). Now if it were contended that this sense would be unprecedented, and not fully supported by any other passage in the Old Testament, still, taking into account what has been said, the supposition would not be altogether unreasonable that our author plays upon the word, and employs it in an unusual and paradoxical sense; at the same time, however, bringing back the word nearer to its radical signification.\*

If the usage of placing Ecclesiastes among the poetical books be followed, it should not be forgotten that, with respect to its conformity to the requirements of poetical form, our book presents a remarkably diversified appearance. If it should be contended with Ewald that there is nowhere in the book mere prose, such an assertion must have regard in great measure to the sentiments expressed, and certainly not to any uniform obedience to the laws of poetical parallelism. Without expressing full assent to the arrangement given by Ewald in his translation (*Die sal. Schrift.*, 2nd ed.), it may be mentioned that he distinguishes the following passages and verses † as wholly or in part poetical:—i. 2, 4—8, 15, 18; ii. 2, 11,\* 14\*; iii. 1—9, 15, 19, 20; iv. 5, 6; v. 2 (3), 6 (7), 9 (10), 14 (15); vi. 4, 5; vii. 7, 12, 19, 29; viii. 1,\* 5; ix. 4, 17—x. 2; x. 6, 8—13, 18, 20\*; xi. 4, 10; xii. 2, 6, 8. For the diversified appearance which the book thus presents, various reasons may be, with greater or less probability, suggested. It may be supposed

\* The reader should compare also viii. 8 and note.

† The verses marked with an asterisk are printed by Ewald as only in part poetical.



that, since the discourse of Koheleth is the discourse of a personified assembly, our book, as it varies from a poetical to a more prosaic form, reflects the practice of the Jewish schools at the time, some of the speakers, and some only, employing the language of poetry (*cp.* 1 Cor. xiv. 26). Or again, as in the poetical drama, the variation in question may be regarded as evidence of artistic skill, a higher and more pleasing effect being thereby produced. Or an explanation may be found in the composite nature of the book, its varying aspect agreeing with the varied character of the sources whence our author obtained his materials. And such an explanation may be given without regarding the book as an inartistic patchwork, or denying that, in accordance with xii. 10, our author very carefully adapted and elaborated the materials which he employed. Or, lastly, the book, as regards the aspect of it in question, may be looked upon as reflecting the comprehensive genius of its author, who, it may be contended, was endowed not only with philosophic penetration and insight, but also with the glowing imagination and formative skill of the poet; the structure of the book varying in accordance with the predominance in the author, now of the poetical, and now of the philosophic element. I am not anxious to make a selection among these different explanations. It is not perhaps necessary to do so, since probably the diversified structure of the book is not due to any one alone of the causes above suggested.

#### § 19.—THE INTEGRITY OF THE TEXT.

A WORD may here be said on the integrity of our present text of Ecclesiastes. After giving a not inconsiderable measure of attention to the book, I see no reason to doubt that we have it, at least substantially, as it came from the author's hands. It may be conceded that the superscription i. 1 is possibly not genuine, and perhaps a few places, as x. 18 (בעצלהים) may be open to suspicion; but I see no valid reason whatever for the unrestrained employment of critical conjecture, or for the supposition that there are

several *lacunæ* in the text, as well as "dislocations" requiring to be rectified. The notion of an exceedingly corrupt text may well be looked upon as an endeavour to "cut the knot" in the case of a confessedly difficult and enigmatical book. Certainly, on behalf of this notion, an appeal cannot be made with success to the testimony of the versions. And, without claiming perfection for the Masoretic pointing of the book (see note on xii. 14), it may be said that there is usually reason for admiration at the sagacity and skill which it displays.

#### § 20.—THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION OF ECCLESIASTES.

THE Septuagint translator of Ecclesiastes evidently used a Hebrew text essentially identical with that which we still possess. His evidence is unfavourable to the notion that our present text is exceedingly disordered and corrupt. On this point there can be no reasonable doubt. Other difficulties and problems are, however, presented by this translation, of which it is not easy, or perhaps even possible, to give an entirely satisfactory solution. If the reader accepts what has been said before as to the anti-Hellenic aim and tendency of our book, it can scarcely appear altogether improbable that the translation of Ecclesiastes into Greek would be for some time deferred. Such a translation, if made, would scarcely enhance the esteem in which the book would be held by the Jewish schoolmen. The precise date of this translation we need not attempt to fix. Moreover, it is sufficiently evident that the Septuagint translator did not understand the aim and intention of the author. Failing in this respect, he seems in general to have adopted the expedient of following the text as closely as he was able.

So much being premised, we have to consider the question with which the name of the late Prof. Graetz has been especially connected, as to the relation of the Septuagint to the version of Aquila. Unfortunately for our inquiry, we possess, of Aquila's version, scanty fragments from Origen's Hexapla, and but little more. Much is therefore left to conjecture. The point, however, which has been particu-

larly insisted on is the manner of rendering אֵל to be found in both the Septuagint and the fragments of Aquila. The view suggested by Graetz in an appendix to his *Kohélet* is certainly not wanting in ingenuity. According to Graetz's opinion, the Greek version given by Origen, as being that of the Septuagint, was really the work of Aquila. Jerome ascribes to Aquila two Bible translations, the first characterised by more or less freedom, and the second being "what the Hebrews call κατ' ἀκριβειαν." The supposed Septuagint fragments given by Origen are to be regarded as really fragments of Aquila's second edition. In this way Graetz accounted for אֵל, when the sign of the accusative, being rendered by σύν in some (but not all) places of the Septuagint version of Ecclesiastes. He adduces, not without force, in favour of his opinion, the fact that though Theodotion lived at a still later date than Aquila, his version of Daniel gained preference over that of the Septuagint. Aquila, moreover, is reputed to have been one of the numerous pupils of R. Akiba; and the closeness of Aquila's second translation is ascribed by Graetz to the influence of that distinguished Rabbi.

Here it may be observed that the alleged facts and considerations adduced by Graetz are not (if they could be supposed true) really inconsistent with what has been said on previous pages of this Introduction concerning the date and purpose of our book. The time when the book was translated into Greek, if supposed to be late, does not affect our argument adversely. It is not easy to accept Graetz's suggestion that Origen's Aquila was taken from "the first or second edition." Judging from the fragments which have come down to us, renderings referred to Aquila are not uniformly closer than those imputed to the Septuagint, whatever may be true with regard to some instances. There is, for example, a failure on the part of Aquila with regard to the important הוֹלִלָה "madness," for which (except in one place, i. 17, to be otherwise explained)\* the

\* It may be suggested that παραβολὰς is a corruption, by a copyist, of an original παραφορὰς, though the ἐπιστήμην following may raise a doubt.

Septuagint gave the essentially synonymous *παραφορά*, *περιφορά*, *περιφέρεια*, but for which Aquila gives the far less close and accurate *πλάνη* and cognate forms in the exceptionally large proportion of places, in this case, where his renderings are preserved. To take only one other example. At v. 5, for לַבַּיִת, where Aquila gives *διαλύση*, the Septuagint much more suitably and accurately gave *διαφθείρη*. Other examples may be found in Field's *Hexapla*.\* But, on the whole, the theory of two translators working independently of each other may be preferred, whatever may be true as to the supposition that the Septuagint text was in some, or many, places changed by the introduction of readings from Aquila. But we have yet to consider what would probably be regarded as the most important matter in this connection—the rendering of לְ by σύν in some places both of the Septuagint and Aquila, or, to express it otherwise, the failure always to distinguish between the two uses or senses of לְ.† The facts are remarkable; but we should not too rashly ascribe them to the overpowering influence of Akiba. The confusion between the two senses of לְ is, according to the Hebrew text of certain Old Testament books, of far older date. Whether it was caused by error, as has been alleged, or whatever be its cause, the fact is indisputable. As the sign of the accusative, לְ has commonly the pointing *o* with pronominal suffixes, while, in the case of the preposition, the vowel *chirek* is used, as, e.g., לְךָ. But in the Books of Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and elsewhere, the preposition occurs expressed by לְ; cp. 2 Kings i. 15; Isa. liv. 15; Ezek. ii. 1, 6, etc. How this confusion originated it is not easy to see, unless it was supposed

\* Dillmann gives an extended list of divergences of the Septuagint Ecclesiastes from Aquila in his paper, "Über die griechische Übersetzung des Qoheleth," in the *Sitzungsberichte d. Königl. Preuss. Akad. d. Wissensch.*, January 7, 1892.

† Dr. C. H. H. Wright (*Koheleth*, p. 52, note) mentions the following places in Aquila's translation of Genesis, where לְ is not rendered by σύν: vi. 3; ix. 22, 23; xxii. 2; xxvii. 15. And he observes also, with regard to Ecclesiastes, "There are more than seventy instances in the book in which the Hebrew particle is found in our present text; and in less than half does the favourite rendering of Aquila occur in the Greek text of the Septuagint" (p. 51).

that the original meaning of  $\text{אִת}$  was "with," though the particle had sometimes lost its proper significance. If such an opinion as this existed, and was passed on by tradition, it is not difficult to see how two independent translators, desiring to render the text of Ecclesiastes closely and literally, might both render  $\text{אִת}$  by  $\sigma\upsilon\nu$ .

But, in accordance with what has been said above, the scantiness of the evidence with regard to Aquila's translation does not admit of an entirely satisfactory solution of the problem being presented, though this fact does not affect conclusions expressed in previous sections.

§ 21.—THE RELATION OF ECCLESIASTES TO THE BOOK  
OF WISDOM.

THERE is between Ecclesiastes and the Book of Wisdom a noteworthy resemblance, of which it is desirable that some account should be given. Though in neither the one nor the other is the name of Solomon explicitly mentioned as the author, yet in both the great Hebrew monarch is in some manner introduced as speaking. Did the author of Wisdom designedly follow the example of Ecclesiastes in connecting his book with Solomon? If, with the view of answering this question, we examine some of the contents of Wisdom, though we may not agree with the opinion that it is in part "an unconcealed polemic against Ecclesiastes,"\* we may yet find indications favourable to the conclusion that the author of Wisdom had the teaching of Koheleth specially in view, and that his clear enunciation of the doctrine of immortality was directed against such Epicurean doctrine as that of Eccl. iii. 18—22. What is said of the souls of the righteous being in the hand of God in Wisd. iii. 1, may recall Eccl. ix. 1. So, in the reasonings of the ungodly in the second chapter, we may fancy there is an allusion to Koheleth's  $\text{הבלי}$  when life is compared to "the tracks of a cloud," or to a mist vanishing under the rays of the sun (Wisd. ii. 4); and in the call to present enjoyment of Wisd. ii. 6—9 there may seem some satirical

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\* Buhl *On the Canon of the Old Testament*, Eng. Trans., p. 23.

reflection of Koheleth's repeated exhortation. Koheleth, however, when he summons to enjoyment, never incites to "lying in wait for the righteous" (Wisd. ii. 12), to "oppressing the poor righteous man," and "sparing not the widow" (Wisd. ii. 10). But these, it may be supposed, are introduced as consequences naturally resulting from the denial of immortality. In like manner we may not unreasonably think that there is some reference to Eccl. i. 11, ii. 16, when we read, "And our name will in time be forgotten, and none will remember our works" (Wisd. ii. 4). It is observable that there is a marked contrast between Ecclesiastes and Wisdom in the fact that the latter, in several of the last chapters, deals at considerable length with the theocratic history, or at least with the account of the rescue from Egypt, and with matters relating thereto. The discourse of Solomon, also, in Wisd. vii., viii., stands in strong contrast with what we find in Eccl. i., ii. In the former, for example, it is said of wisdom that "tarrying with her hath no bitterness, nor living with her a pang, but mirth and joy" (Wisd. viii. 16). In the latter we read that "in much wisdom is much grief, and he who addeth to his knowledge addeth to his pain" (Eccl. i. 18). It may appear not unlikely that Ecclesiastes would be distasteful to a mind of Platonising tendency, loving to clothe the stern realities of the world with the ideal hues of its own subjectivity. On this account the author of Wisdom may have felt some antagonism to our book, even if he did not design altogether to write a reply. Still, he very probably intended to introduce Solomon as uttering what—especially in relation to wisdom and immortality—he may have conceived to be far worthier sentiments than those ascribed to Koheleth in Ecclesiastes.\*

The question may suggest itself whether in making the supposed allusions to Ecclesiastes the author of Wisdom had before him the original Hebrew or a Greek translation. With regard to Isaiah, there appears to be strong evidence

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\* A somewhat analogous view was given by Knobel (*Comm.* p. 98): "So darf man doch darum noch nicht annehmen, dass dieser direct gegen Koheleth polemisire."

that he was acquainted with the Septuagint; but there seems to be no similar evidence with respect to Ecclesiastes.

The exact date of Wisdom is uncertain. The book was written, not improbably, a century later than Ecclesiastes. But such a date is conjectural.

## § 22.—THE RECEPTION OF ECCLESIASTES INTO THE CANON.

If the view given above as to the design of our book and its relation to Jewish history is correct, it may appear probable that, at an early date, and while its intention was still well remembered and understood in the Jewish schools, it received such respect and reverence as obtained for it a place among the Hagiographa. It may even have been included among "the rest of the books" when the prologue to Ecclesiasticus was composed, even if not yet translated into Greek. It would thus be quite conceivable that a century before Christ, or thereabouts, the book was quoted as Scripture by Simon ben Shetach. According to the Jerusalem Talmud (*Berakoth* vii. 2), this distinguished Rabbi quoted Ecclesiastes, placing it at least on a level with Isaiah, and introducing a quotation from Eccl. vii. 12 with the formula "for it is written" *דכתיב*. But, having regard to the interval which must have elapsed before the redaction of the Jerusalem Talmud, a doubt may arise as to whether we can depend on the precise terms employed.

As time, however, advanced, and the circumstances attendant upon the composition of the book were forgotten, or but dimly remembered, it is not difficult to see how doubts may have arisen as to the title of Ecclesiastes to a place among the Hagiographa. I should thus account for those misgivings, recorded in the Mishnah, as to whether Ecclesiastes does or does not "pollute the hands" (*Yadaim* iii. 5). A word must be added as to the meaning of the expression "pollute the hands." At first sight it may seem a strange and unsuitable assertion to make with regard to sacred books, that they "pollute the hands." The explanation is given, however (*Yadaim* iv. 5), that it was out

of regard for the sacred books that they were looked upon as unclean. Greater care and caution are exercised with respect to the unclean than with respect to the clean. In this matter uncleanness is an indication of regard, just as the bones of an ass, though despised and contemptible, are clean, while the venerated bones of the high priest are unclean. No one makes spoons out of the bones of his loved and honoured relations. So, also, the uncleanness of the sacred books is an indication of esteem and love. Heretical books, which are not regarded with affection, do not "pollute the hands" (*Yadaim, l.c.*).

Later discussions concerning the canonicity of Ecclesiastes I do not think it necessary here to consider.

#### § 23.—THE DIVISION OF THE BOOK.

WITH respect to the division of the book, it may be said that, although the portion i. 2 to xii. 8 has, on the whole, a negative character, in accordance with the words "all is vanity" found alike at its commencement and at its close, yet it may be naturally divided into two parts, i. 2 to vi. 12, and vii. 1 to xii. 8.\* (1) i. 2—vi. 12: this may be characterised as pre-eminently the negative part, though the positive element, as in the invitation to worldly enjoyment, is not entirely wanting. On the whole, however, it speaks of disappointment, failure and dissatisfaction, in accordance with the words of vi. 7, 11, "All man's toil is for his mouth, yet his soul is not filled." "Since there are things in abundance which increase vanity, what advantage is it to man?" (2) vii. 1—xii. 8: in like manner this may be called the positive part of the philosophical discourse, since here the positive teaching of Koheleth as to how philosophy may mitigate the evils of life predominates over the negative element. Of anything like a symmetrical and duly subordinated subdivision of these two sections, there appears to be no evidence. Besides the two greater sections, we have the

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\* That a division should be made between the sixth and seventh chapters has been previously suggested; and it can scarcely be said to be other than obvious.



superscription i. 1 and the epilogue. The epilogue, like the philosophical portion of the book, may be divided into two sections, (1) xii. 9-12, containing appended and explanatory matter; (2) xii. 13, 14, the general conclusion of the whole book. We shall thus, if we assign an independent place to the superscription i. 1, have a division into five parts (I.) i. 1; (II.) i. 2—vi. 12; (III.) vii. 1—xii. 8; (IV.) xii. 9-12; (V.) xii. 13, 14. With respect to the further subdivision of the book, the reader may be referred to the paragraphs of the Translation.

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## II.

### EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS.

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**N**EXT after the superscription (i. 1), which ascribes the authorship of what follows **Chap. I.** to "Koheleth, the son of David, king in Jerusalem," we come to the noble prologue (i. 2-11), in the first verse of which is sounded the key note of the philosophical portion of our book, and especially of the first section of it, i. 2 to vi. 12. The prologue, in fact, may be, to some extent, compared to an overture which a skilful musician has so arranged as to give an anticipation of the composition which is to follow, and also to prepare the mind of the hearer for listening to its strains. "Vanity of vanities, said Koheleth, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (i. 2). Man's incessant and restless labour yields him no profit, no permanent and enduring possession (i. 3). The earth, by her stern persistence, mocks the fruitless strivings of the generations of men, as they come and go in endless succession (i. 4). Human life is like the course of the sun, the wind, and the rivers, which appear to be always pursuing some object never to be grasped, striving after a goal which they are destined never to attain. The sun issues forth, day after day, from the east, mounts up the vault of heaven until he has reached the meridian, and then he descends at once towards the western horizon. He never stops in his course at midday, as though he had then attained the end for which he issued forth with the dawn:

he never sinks beneath the horizon to enjoy repose. Even throughout the night he is still hastening onward, that, at the appointed hour, he may again reach his eastern starting-place (i. 5). The wind, great though its changes may be, seems never to accomplish the purpose for which it puts forth its power. It never subsides into a state of lasting quiescence: it never even finds a station which it can permanently occupy. It veereth about continually, yet it ever "repeateth its course, according to its circuits" (i. 6). The streams flow onward to the ocean; but the time never comes when the sea, filled to overflowing, refuses to receive their waters. The thirst of the sea is never quenched; the waters of the rivers are lost; and yet, with unavailing constancy, they still pour their contributions into its bosom (i. 7). Nor does this fruitless activity pertain to the sun, the wind, and the rivers alone. Nature all around is engaged in labour incessant, but resultless; motion monotonous, though multiform; change which tends to its own reproduction, but which presents such variety and complication, that, in contemplating it, the powers of man fail; language, in the attempt to describe it, is exhausted: "A man cannot tell it; the eye is not satisfied in seeing, and the ear is not filled from hearing" (i. 8). Sometimes, indeed, the unvarying succession may appear to be interrupted; it may seem that the vast and complex machinery of Nature has yielded an unexpected and novel product. Some one, ignorant of the past, may say, "Behold this; it is new:" but "it hath been long ago in the olden time which was before us" (i. 9-11).

Still, the suggestion may be made that, although the forces of Nature generally can never attain the end of their activity, and enjoy lasting repose, yet the case is otherwise with man, on account of the high powers which he possesses, and it may be supposed that, by the use of these, he may secure to himself real and substantial good, that which shall appease all longing and desire, and yield him full and perfect satisfaction throughout the days of his life. It may be granted, perhaps, that this has not yet been

attained ; but then those who sought for it may not have possessed the appliances necessary to ensure success ; or, even if they had these, they may have lacked the skill required to use them aright ; or, again, they may have been wanting in perseverance—in that energy which knows no obstacle, in that resoluteness which brooks no defeat.

There was none in Hebrew history, we may well believe, who could be so fitly brought forward to answer such reasoning as the renowned monarch Solomon. If any on earth could have attained perfect satisfaction, it may seem that he surely might have done so, the glory of whose reign was so transcendent, whose dominions were so ample, whose fame was so widely extended, whose wealth was so abundant, whose voluptuousness could be so fully gratified, whose wisdom was so profound and yet so practical, whose enterprises were so magnificent and so successful.

We may thus be enabled to see that there was good reason for the prominence given in our book to the experience of the illustrious monarch : for “ what can the man do who cometh after the king ? ”

It would appear probable that, in the portion of our book from i. 12 to ii. 25, after some general statements with respect to Koheleth's wide survey of human life, we have first, in i. 16-18, an account of his speculative study of the world, and then, in the second chapter, of two practical experiments. The investigation generally was in accordance with the desire for knowledge which God had implanted in man (i. 13). Of the general result it is said, that, having seen all the works done under the sun, Koheleth found all to be empty and vain. There were distortions, things “ crooked,” in the constitution of the world ; and there was vast deficiency which no human art or skill could supply or even measure (i. 14, 15). Koheleth's investigations as a student of “ wisdom and knowledge,” and of heedless and senseless folly, alike failed to yield him satisfaction. He found that “ in much wisdom is much grief ; and he who addeth to his knowledge addeth to his pain ” (i. 18).

We come then to the first of Koheleth's practical experiments (ii. 1, 2), in which, laying aside the character of a student or sage, with fools he became a fool, joining in their jovial revelry and boisterous mirth (ii. 1). But the laughter of fools was as the crackling of the burning thorns. The noisy blaze was but for a moment: the gloom was deep and enduring. Of their laughter he said, "It is struck mad," and of their mirth, "What good doeth this?" (ii. 2). **Chap. II.**

But though riotous mirth had thus failed to yield Koheleth that satisfaction of his nature which he was seeking, that "good for the sons of men, which they may do under the heavens throughout the number of the days of their life," yet what unreasoning revelry could not give might perhaps be obtained from more prudent enjoyment. The excitement of wine and folly might be cautiously indulged in, the "heart guiding wisely" (ii. 3). Under the control of the judgment, pleasure of a higher kind might be conjoined with sensual delights. Koheleth engaged accordingly in executing great works, in the building of palaces, in the planting of vineyards and orchards, and in the laying out of parks and gardens. He acquired possessions, too, in servants and maidens, oxen and sheep, silver and gold and treasure. He obtained, also, singers both male and female, "and the voluptuous pleasures of the sons of men, a wife and a harem" (ii. 4-8).

From the success which Koheleth achieved, and the pleasure which he derived from his works, it might seem that he had now attained the supreme good, and that, though this was beyond the reach of ordinary men, yet that it might be possessed and enjoyed by one pre-eminent in power, in wealth, and in wisdom. Koheleth's satisfaction was not destined, however, to be enduring. After a while his joy passed away, and all was found to be evanescent and vain. Still, on a comparison of wild, unrestrained folly and its pleasures with wisdom and prudence, as exercised in controlling and guiding enjoyment, he found that the latter has as great advantage over the former "as the light

hath greater advantage than the darkness. As for the wise man, his eyes are in his head, but the fool walketh in darkness." There was, however, one fate, one supreme humiliation which awaited both the wise man and the fool. Much as Koheleth had accomplished, he found himself confined within bounds which he could not pass. He must leave his possessions and the works in which he had so much delighted, and die, even as the fool dieth; and then he must be succeeded by another in whose power it would be to mar or destroy the work in accomplishing which he had shown so much skill and wisdom. And this no power of his could prevent; for he must cease for ever from exercising control over the fruits of his own labour and toil. And when a man has succumbed to the inexorable doom, what remains to him of the success he may have achieved through toil, and pain, and sorrow; by laborious days and sleepless nights? All is vanity (ii. 9-23).

Koheleth's two experiments thus proved that full satisfaction was to be obtained neither from riotous revelry nor from the calm and prudent enjoyment of worldly things. The supreme good was in neither case to be found with "the man who eateth and drinketh, and causeth himself to find enjoyment from his toil" (ii. 24). In this result Koheleth perceived "the hand of God," for if any could thus have obtained full and perfect satisfaction, surely this would have been the case with Koheleth, whose powers were so vigorous and whose appetite for pleasure was so keen (ii. 25). There was, indeed, a certain measure of enjoyment which, in accordance with the Divine appointment, might be obtained from worldly things; but he who, by sedulously labouring to heap up and accumulate, strives to pass beyond the appointed limit, is a sinner, whose earnest striving will prove to be but "vanity and a pursuit of the wind." Not perfect and unending bliss, but moderate, limited, and partial enjoyment, was permitted to man while awaiting his certain and inevitable doom (ii. 24-26).

It may thus be seen that the Catalogue of the Times and Seasons (iii. 1-8) follows in **Chap. III.** close connection with what had been before said concerning the limits appointed for man. It is now affirmed that there are times and seasons, fixed and determined, for all human affairs and pursuits. "For every thing there is an appointed time, and a season for every matter under heaven; a season for giving birth and a season for dying; a season for planting and a season for rooting up what was planted; a season for slaying and a season for healing," and so on. This catalogue appears to be given as an enumeration of the various particulars which make up human life from its commencement to its close, or, so to speak, as a kind of syllabus of human life. It is asked, in view of this enumeration of changing and transitory seasons, "What profit hath he who worketh from that wherewith he toileth?" (iii. 9). Nevertheless the successive generations of men still go on planting and rooting up, slaying and healing, breaking down and building up. How is this to be accounted for, if they gain thereby no profit, no substantial and enduring advantage? We may find an answer to this question in the verses which follow (iii. 10, 11). It is God himself who is ever leading them on; they are accomplishing the travail which He has allotted them. He has made all these occupations beautiful and attractive in their respective seasons, and He has "set the world in their heart," so that they are moved by an internal impulse to occupy themselves with its pursuits. Thus, urged by their own appetites, passions, and inclinations, they perceive not the Divine hand, nor, from the beginning of life even to its end, do they "find out the work which God hath wrought" (iii. 10, 11). From the pursuits of life, from worldly concerns, Koheleth asserts men could obtain no good except such seasonable and transitory enjoyment as was allowed by "the gift of God" (iii. 12, 13). This accords with what had been already said (ii. 26).

Times and seasons had been spoken of in which the natural propensities of men may be lawfully indulged, and

in this respect the Divine appointments are unchangeably fixed: "I perceived that, as to all that God doeth, it is to be for ever; there is no making addition to it; and there is no taking away from it, and God so arranged it that they may fear before Him," that is, may fear before Him, seeing the inflexible decision of His character. The course of things, in its invariable sequence, is like a revolving circle, objects on whose periphery are seen again and again in their former position: "Whatever hath been, it had been long ago before, and what is to be already hath been, and God will seek after what hath gone before;" that is, what, in the rotation, has passed by, or, more literally, "what is pursued," objects on a revolving circle seeming to pursue and chase one another; and God will seek after the past, in order to bring it back again in due season (iii. 14, 15).

Yet, notwithstanding the unvarying order of Nature and the fixedness of the Divine appointments, men are found disregarding the allotted times and seasons, and acting in a manner which is altogether ill-timed and unseasonable: "I saw under the sun the place of judgment, there was wickedness, and the place of righteousness, there was wickedness. I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a season for every matter, and for all the work there" (iii. 16, 17).

But, on the other hand, the fact that wickedness was to be found where there should be judgment and righteousness, and that God does not at once interfere to correct and redress this state of things, might suggest the conclusion that there are in reality no times and seasons appointed for human actions; that there is no pre-arranged order in the world; that virtue and vice, righteousness and iniquity, are not to be distinguished by any regard to Divine appointments; and that, in fact, the moral accountability of man is a conceit and a fiction. Thus it may be maintained that the condition of men is like that of beasts, or, that men are themselves beasts, and that the state of things in the world is intended "to test them," and to let it be seen that they are but beasts. "The lot of the



sons of men is also the lot of beasts ;" " as is the death of the one, so is the death of the other." Who knows that the spirit of a man goes upward, or that the spirit of a beast goes downward? No : a man has no pre-eminence above a beast. Both are of the dust, and both turn to dust again ; and there is an end of them both. Let a man, therefore, enjoy the world while he is in it : for this is his only portion : " For who will bring him to look on what will be after him " (iii. 18-22).

Throughout the fourth chapter, it may be observed, there is no mention of the Deity. **Chap. IV.** What is there said may not, perhaps, contain a denial of the moral government of the world so explicit as that found in the last verses of the third chapter, but the tendency appears most certainly to be in the same direction. God troubles Himself not with human affairs. The tear of the oppressed is unheeded ; none interposes on their behalf ; none comes to console them in their affliction : " On the side of those oppressing them there was might ; but they had no comforter." More fortunate than theirs, it is urged, is the condition of the dead, and better still that of him who has not as yet been born, and who has not seen the grievous work done under the sun (iv. 1-3). Then, again, if a man prospers in the world as the result of his exertions, others, instead of rejoicing at his prosperity, are stirred with envy, and thus an excuse is given to the fool who does not exert himself at all, but, folding his hands, suffers penury and want, " eating," as it were, " his own flesh." " Better," says the fool, " is a handful with quietness than the two hands full, with toil and a pursuit of the wind " (iv. 4-6). Then follow (iv. 7-12) observations on individual isolation, as well as on the advantage of union and co-operation. This subject appears to be introduced with the view of showing that men are left to themselves. If they unite to accomplish any purpose, they can then succeed ; but there is no Deity who either helps the solitary individual or interferes with his fate. The miser who has neither son nor brother goes on vainly

amassing wealth, regardless of the question which naturally suggests itself, "For whom am I toiling, and depriving myself of enjoyment?" If two are together, and one of them falls down, the other can help his companion to rise again; "but woe to the one who falleth when there is not a second to raise him up." If two lie together, they may derive warmth one from the other, "but, as for one, how can he be warm?" So again, in the case of an assault, though one may be overpowered, two can oppose an effectual resistance; "and a threefold cord is not quickly broken"—this being, not improbably, a proverbial expression, setting forth the advantage of close and intimate union (iv. 8-12). The next verse speaks of "a king old and foolish, who hath no longer the sense to accept admonition." At first there may seem to be here a break in the continuity of thought; but a very little reflection may suffice to show that a king who will accept from others neither admonition nor warning is a signal example of isolation. So also the leading idea appears clearly discernible in the mention of "the prison-house," the place of constrained separation from the world: "Out of the prison-house he went forth to reign;" words not probably to be taken of any historical fact, but merely as vividly depicting how the supposed old and foolish king cuts himself off from the experience of others. Possibly, also, it may be implied that, spurning admonition, the king acts like one who, coming out of a prison, throws off all restraint in the joy of his new liberty. The disastrous effect of such a king's misgovernment is shown in the poverty of his subjects. A person young in years, and poor, if but wise and prudent, would be a better ruler than the old self-willed king (iv. 13, 14).

It might be considered, however, that what had been said was only of partial application; and, accordingly, in the last two verses of the chapter we find presented to us a more comprehensive view, extending to three generations: "I saw all the living that walk under the sun, with the second child, who is to stand in their stead." On this

comprehensive view two observations are made. The first of these is, that "there is no end to all the people." This observation concerning the limitless number of the people is made, not improbably, in opposition to the idea that man's condition is conformed to a divinely appointed plan. Looked at in the aggregate, humanity presented to the view no such definiteness as would suggest the idea of design. The second observation is, with regard to the connection of thought, particularly important: "As to all that was before them, even those who come after rejoice not therein." Previously the isolation of individuals had been spoken of, but now a separateness in the interests of whole generations is asserted (iv. 15, 16).

If, however, there is a Deity presiding over the affairs of men, might we not expect to find unity instead of disintegration? harmony instead of discord? Would the individual be left to fall unheeded and alone? Would success depend on union and co-operation? Would the poor man suffer from the reckless misgovernment of the self-willed king? Would the weak be oppressed, down-trodden, and left without a comforter?

"Take heed to thy steps when thou goest to the House of God, for more acceptable is it **Chap. V.** to draw nigh to hear, than for fools to offer a sacrifice, though they mean not to do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart hasten to utter a word before God; for God is in heaven and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few." He who treats of Divine things, comes, as it were, into the very Temple of God. Therefore, in speaking of the way in which the world is ordered and governed, there should be caution, deliberation, reverence. The speech of a man who talks at random concerning the Divine administration may be likened to the unacceptable sacrifice of the fool, who means not to do evil, although in his heedlessness he may disregard the law (v. 1, 2). Besides, it is a serious matter to speak before God: the vow once made could not be retracted; the word spoken was irrevocable. "What thou vowest, pay. Better

is it that thou shouldest not vow than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Allow not thy mouth to make thy body sin." The discourse of a man who says a great deal, and speaks hastily, is likely to be wanting in consistency and coherence. It may thus be compared to a dream in which images are presented to the mind without order, and the circumstances of which are wholly deficient in congruity: "As a dream cometh, attended with much commotion, so cometh a fool's voice with a multitude of words." "As in a multitude of dreams there are vanities, so also is it with an abundance of words; but fear thou God" (v. 3-7).

By insisting on the necessity of caution, deliberation, and reverence, the way is prepared for observations in defence of the Divine administration, and in reply to what had been before said (comp. iv. 1 with v. 8): "If thou seest in a country the oppression of the poor and the perversion of right and justice, marvel not at the matter; for One higher than the high observeth, and there are powers high above them" (v. 8). It is shown, further, that there is a distribution of earthly good more nearly equal than may at first sight appear. In some respects all men stand on the same footing. The produce of one field may supply the wants of both the peasant and the prince: "As to the produce gained from the land, it is shared among all; the king is dependent on the field" (v. 9). If some men have greater wealth than others, their enjoyment of life is not on this account necessarily enhanced. With the increase of wealth cupidity and avarice become more intense: "He who loveth silver is not satisfied with silver, nor he who delighteth in abundance, with increase" (v. 10). Besides, "when wealth increaseth, they increase who eat it; and what advantage hath the owner thereof except the beholding with his eyes?" (v. 11). The poor labourer who earns his bread by daily toil, and enjoys at night refreshing repose, may have an advantage over the man of abounding wealth: "Sweet is the sleep of the labourer, whether he eat little or much; but, as to the satiety of the rich man, it doth not allow him to fall asleep" (v. 12). Moreover, it

would have been better for some men never to have become rich, since wealth may be "kept by its owner to his injury" (v. 13). "And that wealth perished in a grievous manner; for he begat a son, and there was nothing in his hand;"—meaning probably that the son was a spendthrift, a reckless prodigal; and so the parent, his wealth having been dissipated, is left to pass his declining days in darkness and sorrow, affliction and anger (v. 14-17).

So signal an example of evil consequences resulting from the reservation of wealth, and of failure to enjoy therewith the pleasures of the passing hour, gives an opportunity for asserting again that it is suitable for a man to derive present and seasonable gratification from the earthly good which circumstances may offer. And if it is given him to possess wealth, and to enjoy prosperity, he should allow his days to glide by in calm and tranquil pleasure, feeling that his life is in harmony with that of God Himself (v. 18-20).

It has been already shown that the possession of wealth is accompanied by drawbacks **Chap. VI.** and counterpoises which tend to equalise the condition of men. If wealth does not yield enjoyment and satisfaction, its possession may even be looked upon as a calamity. This is exemplified in the case of one to whom God gives wealth and honour, yet without allowing him to enjoy these gifts. Perhaps, on attaining the summit of his ambition, he may be reduced to penury by some sinister occurrence; or perhaps, by the stroke of death, he may be cut off childless, and a stranger may take his possessions (vi. 1, 2). Nor is happiness a necessary result of the possession of wealth, together with a numerous family and protracted longevity, not even though a man should beget a hundred children, and live for two thousand years. He who ever postpones to the future satisfaction and fruition, may possibly be so intent on preparation for future enjoyment, or so careless, as to neglect even to provide a sepulchre which may perpetuate his name. And dying without his soul being "satisfied with good," he departs

in the darkness, and his name is covered with darkness (vi. 3-6).

The intent pursuit of wealth, the eager, unremitted striving after earthly things, fails to appease the cravings of man's nature; he is left still unsatisfied and hungry: "All man's toil is for his mouth, yet his soul is not filled" (vi. 7). There is, as was before insisted on, a certain limited measure of enjoyment possible for men, and, with respect to this, they are to a great extent on a footing of equality: "For what advantage has the wise over the fool? or what over even the poor man who knoweth how to walk before the living?" (vi. 8). Better, it is true, than a continued restless striving after future earthly good is this present moderate enjoyment, "the sight of the eyes," but even this is vain and empty (vi. 9). Man possesses now, as he always has possessed, a feeble nature. This was indicated by the name long ago given to him, *Adam*, of the earth, earthy (comp. Gen. v. 2). His restless striving after the perfect good must, of necessity, be fruitless. So weak and impotent a creature cannot possibly gain a victory over the One mightier than he, who has determined that he shall not find a perpetual unalloyed satisfaction in any earthly pursuits or pleasures: "As to what hath been, his name was given to him long ago, and it was known that he is Man (*adam*); and he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he" (vi. 10). He may indeed resist the Divine appointments: he may in many ways, in accordance with what has been said, add to the vanity of his earthly lot, but "what advantage is it to man?" (vi. 11). The question may then be asked, Can nothing be found to assuage the cravings of man's nature? Is there no pursuit to which, without "increasing vanity," he may apply himself throughout "the days of his vain life?" "For who knoweth what is good for man in life, during the number of the days of his vain life, so that he may make them like the shadow, since who can tell a man what will be after him under the sun?" (vi. 12). With this question the negative section of the philosophical part of our book

ends; with the next chapter the answer to the question commences.

The positive section (vii. 1 to xii. 8) exhibits wisdom as of surpassing value to man, but yet not as perfect and unalloyed good. This part of our book is, moreover, tentative, grappling with problems which it does not profess to have solved. At its close (xii. 8) as at the commencement of the negative part (i. 2) is sounded that full, deep utterance, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

At the outset the immaterial is preferred before the material and sensuous, a good **Chap. VII.** reputation before fragrant oil or precious ointment: "Better is a good name than fragrant ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth" (vii. 1). It appears unlikely that there is in the latter part of the verse any reference to a state of future blessedness. More probably is it to be taken in accordance with the ancient dictum that none was to be accounted happy before his death, since throughout life the future is uncertain. A good name which has been gained may be injured or destroyed by a man's subsequent acts, but, when life has been finished and sealed by death, this is no longer possible. Moreover, death may teach lessons of especial value to the living, may communicate to them just views of life, and produce a seriousness indispensable to those who would be truly wise. Those who desire this preparation of heart should visit "the house of mourning," and ponder its lessons on the brevity of life and the solemn mystery of death. The heart chastened and subdued may become calm and tranquil, even if the countenance is saddened and pensive (vii. 2-4). With the pursuit of true wisdom the laughter and merriment of fools has no congruity: it is but like the crackling of the burning thorns. Better is it to be reproached by a wise man than to listen to such mirth (vii. 5, 6). Still, to hear the reproach even of the wise is to endure present pain, though this pain may be followed by improvement in the character of him who bears the reproach. We may thus trace a connection with what follows, if we translate, "For

the infliction of pain maketh a wise man shine forth, but a gift corrupteth the heart" (vii. 7). The view thus suggested appears entirely in accordance with the next two verses: "Better is the end of a thing than its beginning; better is the man of patient spirit than the man of proud spirit. Be not in haste to indulge anger in thy spirit, for anger dwelleth in the bosom of fools" (vii. 8, 9). He who is involved in calamity and misfortune is not unlikely to look back with regret on days gone by, and to ask, Why were they better? Such a question, Koheleth teaches, is not the dictate of wisdom (vii. 10). Other possessions, indeed, may be lost, but, to the wise man, one possession of surpassing excellence still remains: "Wisdom is as good as an inheritance, and better too to those who see the sun. For wisdom serveth as a protection; and money serveth as a protection; but knowledge hath an advantage: wisdom preserveth in life those who possess it" (vii. 11, 12). Moreover, to resist Omnipotence is useless. It is the part of a wise man to conform his conduct to the Divine appointments, and to refrain from engaging in a struggle so fruitless and unavailing. Prosperity and adversity are alike of Divine appointment. Each, therefore, should be allowed to exercise its proper influence on the character—an influence which, if exercised at all, must be exercised during life, since "man findeth nothing after him." "Behold the work of God, for who can straighten what He hath made crooked? In the day of prosperity enjoy thyself, but in the day of adversity behold. God, indeed, hath set the one corresponding to the other, because man findeth nothing after him" (vii. 13, 14). The apparent moral anomalies of the world do, however, severely test the wise man. He may see a good man cut off in the midst of an honourable and useful course, possibly in consequence of his firm and uncompromising integrity, while to a notorious sinner a long life is allowed; nay, his very wickedness may seem profitable and advantageous. He who observes such facts may be tempted to conclude that God puts no difference between good and evil, and consequently he may



plunge into sin, and become "foolish" and "overmuch wicked"; or, on the other hand, there is danger lest he should assume to be "exceedingly wise" and "righteous overmuch," sitting in judgment on the Holy One, and calling in question the wisdom and justice of His doings: "I saw all in the days of my vanity: sometimes a righteous man perisheth in his righteousness, and sometimes a wicked man longeth his life in his wickedness. Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself out exceedingly wise: why shouldest thou be struck with dismay? Be not wicked overmuch, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time? It is well that thou shouldest take hold of the one admonition, and, also, from the other decline not thy hand; for he who feareth God will come forth from them all." Such a one is neither overmuch wicked nor righteous overmuch: he comes forth from all the trials to which the difficulties of God's moral government subject him (vii. 15-18). But the wise man attains this victory not only because he is under the guidance of wisdom, but because wisdom rules over him. To coerce the evil still existing in his nature, Wisdom has to dominate within him with a power greater than that of ten rulers in a city (vii. 19): "For there is not a righteous man on earth who doeth well, and sinneth not" (vii. 20). Absolute moral perfection is not to be expected; the taint of evil pervades humanity: "Moreover, do not pay attention to all the words which people speak, lest thou hear thy servant reviling thee. For thy heart knoweth that thou, even thou, hast many times also reviled others" (vii. 21, 22).

The words of the following verse, "I said, I will be wise; but it was too far off for me," etc., should be viewed in close connection with what had been said just before. The moral condition of mankind, and the moral government of the world by God, presented a problem which baffled all attempts at solution: "I said, I will be wise; but it was too far off for me. That which was far off and exceedingly deep, who could find it out?" (vii. 23, 24). The inquiry in which Koheleth now engaged was not to result even in such

success as he had before attained, testing all by wisdom (vii. 23). The investigation was directed apparently towards two objects,—first, to the discovery of the philosophy of man's moral condition—the reason why it was what it was, or the plan of which it was the embodiment; and, secondly, to the acquiring a knowledge of moral evil in its fuller development and manifestation. With respect to the second branch of the investigation, Koheleth does not appear to have been altogether unsuccessful, but, with regard to the first, in the main he failed, though he found that man, at first made upright by God, had "sought out many inventions." It would appear that the inquiry was pursued inductively, and that the plan of man's moral condition was sought for by the successive examination of individual characters or particular facts. In the course of the inquiry Koheleth was led to conclusions especially unfavourable to the moral character of woman: "I proceeded, I and my heart, to know, and to explore, and to seek out wisdom and a plan, and to know the depravity of obduracy and folly, even madness. And I find a more bitter thing than death, the woman who, as to her heart, is nets and snares, whose hands are bonds: he who is pleasing to God will escape from her; but the sinner will be caught by her. See, this I found, said Koheleth, considering one by one to find a plan, which my soul hath up to this time sought, but I have not found: one man out of a thousand I found, but a woman in all these I found not. Only see, this I found, that God had made man upright, but they had sought out many inventions" (vii. 25-29).

What had been said about Koheleth's inquiry and its results gave an opportunity for **Chap. VIII.** speaking of the deep joy of the wise man, when he has solved a problem or conducted an investigation to a successful issue: "Who is as the wise man? and who as he that knoweth the explanation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the sternness of his countenance is changed" (viii. 1).

In the seventh chapter Koheleth had treated of the wise

man with respect to Providence—to “the work of God” in relation to the circumstances and conditions of man’s earthly lot. In the eighth chapter he advances beyond this, and speaks of the wise man in relation to Law. In a very effective manner the concrete appears to be put for the abstract. A king is brought before us, as though he were Law personified or embodied. His power is derived from God, the fountain of law. He is God’s vicegerent, as is shown by the fact that he can adjure men, putting them under the sanctions and penalties connected with such adjuration (comp. Lev. v. 1; 1 Sam. xiv. 24; Matt. xxvi. 63); for this is probably what is implied in the mention of “the oath of God”: “I say: Observe the king’s commandment, and that on account of the oath of God. Be not in haste to go from before him: persist not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever he pleaseth: Because the king’s word is with authority, and who can say unto him, What doest thou? He who observeth what is commanded hath experience of no evil thing, and the heart of the wise man discerneth both season and law” (viii. 2-5). Men do, however, very commonly disobey law. Disobedience is followed by suffering; the conscience is disturbed, and the soul is troubled by fears of future punishment: “Since for every matter there is a season and a law, the misery of man is great upon him. For he knoweth not what will be: for when it will be, who can tell him?” (viii. 6, 7). Especially do the fears of men converge towards that great crisis of existence, death—that war from which there is neither exemption nor discharge: “There is no man having power over the wind, so as to hold in the wind; and there is no control over the day of death; and there is no discharge in war; and wickedness will not deliver those who commit it” (viii. 8). Difficulty or uncertainty may attach to some of the expressions in this verse and in those immediately preceding, but still there appears to be no sufficient reason for questioning that, the subject of law having been introduced by what had been said about the king, we have in these verses statements concerning

the general operation of law, especially in relation to man as a transgressor. We then find brought before us another fact with regard to Law—that it does not appear in this world in full and unsullied majesty. Injustice and oppression sometimes occupy the place of the holy, and sit on the seat of justice: “I saw all this, and I gave my heart to all work which was done under the sun: there was a season when man ruled over man to his injury” (viii. 9). And this was looked upon, not as a surprising and abnormal portent, but as a thing so little strange and unusual, that the wicked rulers passed away like other men, and were buried like them; and by and by they were even “forgotten in the city where they had so done” (viii. 10). Another apparent imperfection in the operation of law is manifested in delay occurring before merited punishment is inflicted. Transgressors in consequence become emboldened: “Because the sentence against the evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men within them is fully determined on doing evil” (viii. 11). Still, if justice does not at once poise her balance, it must not be inferred that she will never make her award. The penalty may overtake the transgressor not the less certainly, if it travel with slow and halting step. The reward of the righteous may be not the less sure, even if it be for a while delayed: “Although the sinner doeth evil a hundred times, and prolongeth his days yet surely I know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. But it will not be well with the wicked man, neither will he lengthen out his days like the shadow; because he feareth not before God” (viii. 12, 13). The comparison with the shadow would thus imply that a wicked man’s life will not be lengthened out as a shadow is when sunset approaches. In fact, however, if length of life or other manifest advantage is the due reward of the wise and righteous man who obeys law, it does sometimes happen—in accordance with what has been already said—not only that he never receives his due, but even that he suffers from evils which should have been inflicted on the

disobedient; while, on the other hand, the wicked man passes a life as calm, tranquil, and prosperous as if he had been doing "the work of the righteous" (viii. 14). But, if this is the fact, why should wisdom be so painfully pursued? Why should the house of mourning be preferred to the banquet? "And I commended enjoyment, because there is nothing good for man under the sun, except to eat, and to drink, and to enjoy; for this will abide with him in his toil, during the days of his life, which God hath given him under the sun" (viii. 15).

In the verses viii. 16—ix. 2, an advance is made upon the position before maintained, that to *some* righteous men it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, and that to *some* wicked men it happeneth according to the work of the righteous; a position which is consistent with the conclusion that generally "the work of God" in punishing or rewarding men is seen in the apportionment to them of earthly good or evil, and that thus is given, on the whole, a manifest indication whether men have been obedient or disobedient, righteous or wicked. But, in opposition to such a conclusion, it is affirmed in the passage just cited that men cannot thus distinguish "the work of God," and that it is altogether impossible to discern His love or His hatred in the outward circumstances of men, or in "all that is before them." "When I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to see the busy work which was carried on upon the earth—for indeed neither by day nor night doth it see sleep with its eyes—then I saw, as to all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work which is done under the sun, because that though man should toil in seeking it, yet will he not find it out, and even if the wise man should think to know it, he will not be able to find it out. For I laid all this to my heart, even to investigate all this, that the righteous and the wise, **Chap. IX.** and their works, are in the hand of God, yet men discern neither love nor hatred in all that is before them. All is alike to all: there is one lot to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and to the pure, and to him

that is defiled, and to him who sacrificeth and to him who sacrificeth not; as is the good man, so is the sinner, he who sweareth as he who feareth an oath" (viii. 16—ix. 2).

The fact that the present condition and external circumstances of men are not in accordance with their moral character and actions, but "that there is one lot to all," affords a provocative to reckless wickedness: "Therefore, indeed, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart during their life, and afterwards they go to the dead. For to one who is in company with all the living there is confidence, for, even a living dog, he is better than the dead lion" (ix. 3, 4). The teeming life which a man sees around him, while he is associated with the living, not unnaturally gives rise to a feeling of hope and confidence. "Even a living dog, he is better than the dead lion," was probably a proverbial expression, implying contempt for the dead, and indicating also that life, while it lasted, was to be prized and enjoyed. "For the living know that they will die; but, as for the dead, they know not anything, and they have no further reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, as well as their hatred and their envy, hath long ago perished, and they have no more for ever a part in anything that is done under the sun" (ix. 5, 6).

Koheleth's reprehension of the moral administration of the world seems now to have reached a climax, and, in accordance with this fact, his exhortation to enjoyment and activity has a greater amplitude than what had preceded: "Go, eat thy bread with gladness, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for long ago hath God approved thy works. At every season let thy garments be white, and let there be no lack of ointment on thy head. Enjoy life with the woman whom thou lovest, during all the days of thy vain life, which He hath given thee under the sun, during all the days of thy vanity; for that is thy portion in life, and in thy toil whereat thou toilest under the sun" (ix. 7-9). The tenth verse must be understood in a sense agreeing with the context. As life was to be regarded as

the time for enjoyment, so also was it the time for activity : "All that thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is neither work, nor plan, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in Sheol, whither thou art going" (ix. 10). Probably Sheol does not denote "the grave," but that gloomy subterranean receptacle, the supposed dwelling-place of the inert and feeble shades (comp. Isa. xiv. 9-18).

Nor is it moral excellences alone which fail to meet with their due reward in this world. The case is similar with respect to physical and intellectual attainments and endowments : "Again, I saw under the sun that neither to the swift is the race, nor to the men of might the battle, nor yet to wise men bread, nor yet to men of understanding riches, nor yet to men of discernment favour, but seasons and accidents happen to them all. For man also knoweth not his season—like fishes that are caught in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so they, the sons of men, are snared by an evil season, when it falleth upon them suddenly" (ix. 11, 12).

That an external reward may not be gained by intellectual excellence and skill, even if successfully and beneficially exerted, is illustrated by the case of a little city which, when it had few to defend it, and was besieged by a powerful monarch, was delivered by "a poor wise man," who, however, even after he had been thus successful, was disregarded and despised : "I saw also this example of wisdom under the sun, and it appeared great unto me : A little city, and few men within it, and a great king came against it, and surrounded it, and built great forts over against it. And he found in it a poor wise man, and the latter delivered the city by his wisdom, yet no man remembered that same poor man. And I said, Wisdom is better than might; but the wisdom of the poor man is despised, and, as to his words, they are not heard" (ix. 13-16). This narrative points to one of the causes why intellectual excellence may fail of obtaining an external reward—the unwillingness not uncommonly manifested among men, to recognise mental power when dissociated from extrinsic

and artificial advantages. Where these advantages are too highly valued, it is probable that there the "poor wise man" will suffer injustice, and that his wisdom will be neglected and despised. The philosopher, if needy and obscure, may be regarded with proud disdain by "fools" who pay servile homage to the "great king" with his armies and his forts, or even to the ignorant plebeian who dazzles their eyes with glittering wealth. Nevertheless, the men of thought are true kings, even though they may lack the outward semblance of royalty; and wisdom is a power in the world such as neither wealth nor artificial distinction can confer: "The words of wise men in quietness are heard above the outcry of him who ruleth over fools" (ix. 17). But, great as is the power of wisdom, evil also possesses great power. One poor wise man may defeat a great king; but one sinner can render valueless and corrupt much of the good which wisdom has attained: "Better is wisdom than weapons of war; but one sinner may destroy much good" (ix. 18).

From the mischievous influence exerted by one sinner the transition is easy to the evil **Chap. X.** effect which a little folly may produce in the character of a wise man: "Dead flies cause the perfumer's ointment to stink and putrefy; so doth a little folly a man esteemed on account of wisdom and honour" (x. 1). Care ought therefore to be exercised, in order that a little folly may not corrupt and spoil a character otherwise beautiful and symmetrical. He who would acquire and retain a reputation for wisdom ought to be eminently prudent. We are thus introduced to the general subject of the tenth chapter, in which Koheleth, leaving behind the great problem of man's moral condition, descends to the level of common life, and insists on the importance of practical wisdom, tact, prudence, caution. Looking at the chapter as a whole, the thread of thought which runs through it appears very clearly manifest. A wise man considers the course of circumstances without, and thus he is enabled to do the right thing at the proper time. His "heart is at his



right hand, but a fool's heart is at his left" (x. 2). The fool has not the prudent self-restraint which would conceal his folly, but, even as he goes along, he makes his deficiency conspicuous : " he saith to all that he is a fool " (x. 3). By practical wisdom and prudent submission, the anger even of a ruler may be appeased, and the consequences of his wrath averted : " If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, quit not thy place, for yielding letteth great offences remain quiet " (x. 4). The advantage of prudence and practical wisdom may be shown by adducing (as in ver. 2) examples of evil resulting from the opposite qualities. Imprudence and want of practical wisdom are conspicuous, when a ruler, passing by men of superior ability or fitness, assigns prominent positions to persons destitute of appropriate qualifications : " There is an evil which I saw under the sun, it appearing as an error which proceedeth from the ruler. Folly is put in very exalted positions, while great men remain in a lowly rank. I saw servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth " (x. 5-7). Circumspectness, caution, and practical wisdom are necessary not only to the prince and courtier, but even to him who labours in digging or hewing. If he is careless in digging a pit, he may fall into it; if he is incautious in breaking down a fence, a serpent may bite him (x. 8). And in a similar manner, " he who quarrieth stones may be hurt by them : he who cleaveth trees may be endangered by them. If the iron be blunt, and he sharpen not the edge, then must he exert great strength ; but the right guidance of wisdom is an advantage " (x. 9, 10). Moreover, what has been said about digging, cleaving trees, cutting out stones, etc., may have been intended to intimate figuratively that prudence and practical wisdom are required in intercourse with *men*. At any rate the lesson is set forth in what follows. There are unduly loquacious people who resemble serpents in the mischief which they inflict, and who require to be treated with much tact and skill, if they are to be rendered innocuous : " If the serpent, unless charmed, will bite, the babbler is no better " (x. 11). This

foolish loquacity, with its mischievous results, contrasts strongly with the well-ordered and prudent speech of the man distinguished by practical wisdom. "The words of a wise man's mouth are acceptable, but the lips of a fool swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly, and the end of his talk is mischievous madness. For the fool multiplieth words : man knoweth not what it is that will be, and what will be after him, who can tell him?" (x. 12-14). The latter part of ver. 14 "Man knoweth not," etc., probably contains the idea that, as a man's knowledge is limited, his speech should be prudent and restrained. With respect to the following verse (ver. 15), it may be observed that "not to know how to go to the city" was probably a proverbial expression, used to denote clownish ignorance and deficiency of practical wisdom : "The toil of fools wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city" (x. 15). Especially disastrous are the consequences likely to ensue when the government of a country is in the hands of persons who are at once incompetent and imprudent, and when its princes pass amid revelry and feasting the time which should be devoted to the concerns of the state : "Woe to thee, O land, whose king is a boy, and whose princes eat in the morning. Happy art thou, O land, whose king is of noble descent, and whose princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for carousing" (x. 16, 17). The next two verses contain what were probably prudential maxims or proverbs, the first relating to the evil effects of indolence : "By great slothfulness the framework decayeth, and by slackness of hands the house drippeth through" (x. 18). The following verse appears designed to teach the value of money, and consequently the importance of a prudent economy, the general thread of thought being, it may be observed, still manifest : "They prepare food for conviviality, and wine maketh life joyful ; but money answereth for all things" (x. 19). Prudence, moreover, should regulate not only actions and words, but even the thoughts and purposes of the heart. Thoughts of evil may in an unguarded

moment, or a time of seeming security, give birth to words, and these it may be impossible to recall : "Even in thy thoughts revile not the king, nor in thy bedchamber revile the great man ; for the bird of heaven may carry the sound, and that which hath wings may tell of the matter" (x. 20). With this verse Koheleth's exhortations to prudence and caution reach a climax. The chapter which follows stands in antithesis and contrast, though the first verses (xi. 1, 2) may be regarded as giving a link of connection.

Care, circumspectness, and caution, thrift and economy, may become excessive. And, **Chap. XI.** after all, so uncertain is the future, and so feeble and short-sighted is man, that the most careful precautions against future evil may be unavailing. The storm of adversity may suddenly, and in a moment, dissipate the wealth accumulated during long years of prudent saving and painful self-denial. It is the part, therefore, of a wise man to act with great liberality towards those who need his help ; for they in turn may be able to befriend and succour him, if it should ever be his lot to endure adversity. "Cast thy bread upon the face of the waters, for in the course of time thou wilt find it. Give a portion to seven and even to eight, for thou knowest not in what way calamity will come upon the earth" (xi. 1, 2). The sky is perhaps at present clear, but soon it may become black with the clouds of adversity. The winds may rush forth to struggle together for the mastery ; and the bright sunshine may be succeeded by the raging and pitiless storm. Then the most stately tree may be laid prostrate by a sudden blast, never to regain its former magnificence, but, where it falls, whether on the south, or on the north, there to be (xi. 3). To perfect and absolute security none can attain. The most anxious watching of external circumstances may be fruitless. Besides, a too careful solicitude about the future may result in timorousness, disqualifying for the active duties of life : "A man heeding the wind will not sow, and one looking at the clouds will not reap" (xi. 4). The dispensations of Divine Providence are hidden as the way of

the wind, and mysterious as the growth of the embryo in the womb (xi. 5). In the morning sow thy seed, and at evening rest not thy hand, for thou knowest not which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will be alike good" (xi. 6). In what follows, it should be observed, there is still contrast with the carefulness and prudence inculcated in the previous chapter.

Koheleth now finds opportunity to begin his last exhortation to present enjoyment, and especially to appropriate and seasonable indulgence in pleasure during the continuance of youth. Youth is the morning of life. The rising sun then makes the world appear bright and beautiful. "And the light is sweet, and pleasant it is to the eyes to behold the sun" (xi. 7). But neither the morning nor the day can always continue: the time of darkness is approaching. The day will soon be gone. While it lasts, as much enjoyment as possible should be secured: "If men live many years let them rejoice in them all, and let them remember the days of darkness, for they will be many" (xi. 8). It seems likely that, by the darkness spoken of, and contrasted apparently with life, as a time of light, is meant, not old age, but the darkness of Sheol, that "darkness like the deep gloom of the shadow of death, and where there is no order, and where the shining is like deep gloom" (Job. x. 22). Existence in Sheol would thus be the "coming vanity." So suitable is enjoyment to youth, that he who then rejects pleasure must be looked upon as acting unseasonably (comp. iii. 1-8, 16, 17), and violating the course of nature, —conduct for which he may expect to be brought into judgment: "Enjoy, O young man, thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and according to the sight of thine eyes, and know that concerning all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away affliction from thy body, for youth and dawning-time are vanity" (xi. 9, 10).

In considering the first verse of the twelfth chapter, we should bear in mind the exhortation to enjoyment which had preceded. The **Chap. XII.** “remembering the Creator in the days of youth,” even if it implies a general regard for the appointed times and seasons, will, in accordance with the context, more especially point to youthful pleasure and enjoyment as being in conformity with the very nature of man as created by God. In the previous chapter (ver. 8), enjoyment through the whole of life had been spoken of in contrast to “the days of darkness,” but now life itself is distinguished into different seasons, and youth is followed by days of evil, and years when pleasure has departed. “And remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the days of evil come, and years arrive, when thou wilt say, I have no pleasure in them ” (xii. 1). In the winter of age there may be no longer the clear and bright sky ; but the thick clouds returning constantly after the rain, may hide the sun and the light by day, and the moon and the stars by night (xii. 2). In accordance with what precedes, the natural decay and dissolution of the body is described in beautiful, though, for the most part, metaphorical, language in verses 3-7. Probably the body is conceived of at first as though a noble mansion or regal palace. The guard, the keepers of the house, tremble. The men of might bow themselves, possibly through fear, or on account of the lengthened period during which they have remained on duty. The reference in these expressions to the shaking arms and bending knees of old age may be admitted without much difficulty. And it seems scarcely necessary to comment on the significance of “the grinding-women” becoming few and ceasing from their labours, and of “the women looking out at the lattice-windows being darkened” (xii. 3). The reference to the failure of the teeth and to the impaired power of vision is not to be mistaken. The fourth verse presents greater difficulty : “And the two-leaved door is shut in the street, when the sound of the mill faileth, and it becometh the voice of a bird ; and all the daughters of

song are brought low" (xii. 4). "The door being shut" may refer to the approach of the chin to the nose, and to the mouth falling in through the loss of the teeth. "The sound of the mill," it would appear, must be understood of *the voice*, probably because the tongue, teeth, and other parts of the mouth, which are used in grinding the food or in eating, are set in motion also in speaking. "Becoming the voice of a bird" would thus indicate that change in the voice which Shakespeare has described in the well-known quotation :—

" His big manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound."

The failure of the *song-voice* would then be denoted by the words, "the daughters of song are brought low." In the following verse we have no longer a description of the body as a house. At first (ver. 5) it would seem that aged persons are spoken of without metaphor, but afterwards new and remarkable figures are introduced. "Also they are afraid of what is high, and terrors are in the way, and the almond-tree blossometh, and the locust is a burden to itself, and the caper-fruit splitteth open, for man goeth to his everlasting home, and the mourners have gone about in the street" (xii. 5). The first part of the verse probably represents the timidity characteristic of old age, and the difficulty, through feebleness, of making any ascent, or of encountering any obstacle which may be met with in the way. The almond-tree, covered in winter by a profusion of pale-hued blossoms, which, it is alleged, before falling off, become white, would be a not inappropriate symbol of the hoary head of age. The locust, seemingly bent down by its own weight, may well represent great decrepitude, while the caper-fruit, now ripened and directed downward to the earth, to which at last it yields up its seeds, would point to the final act of dissolution. The symbols employed would thus be placed in appropriate gradation. And with this, the conclusion of the verse would accord, if taken as denoting the funeral procession with attendant mourners, conveying the corpse to the grave, the

"everlasting home." But, on another view, man's "going to his everlasting home" may have reference to the journey, not yet quite completed, toward Sheol, the supposed subterranean receptacle of departed shades (cp. ix. 10; Isa. xiv. 9). And "the mourners in the street" may perhaps describe figuratively the doleful sounds proceeding from the throat of the dying man. With this latter view the "going about in the street" need occasion no difficulty, and there is no necessity to suppose that in the next verse (ver. 6) Koheleth *goes back* to the period before dissolution, when, reverting probably to the conception of a house and its appointments, he speaks of the failure of the silver cord and the golden bowl; of the "water-jar shattered over the spring, and the wheel broken at the cistern" (xii. 6). Underlying the first part of the verse is *possibly* the idea of the house being left in darkness through the failure of its lamp, and, in the second part, that of the supply of water to the house being interrupted. Whether Koheleth has or has not in view, at first, the spinal cord, and the skull containing the brain, and then the circulatory apparatus, when he speaks of the fountain and cistern, the language still points to the cessation of the bodily functions in death, when, according to the next verse, "the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it" (xii. 7). That there is in this verse an indication of the continued immortality of the individual human soul appears improbable. It would suitably denote the re-absorption of the soul into God, as the dust of the body mingles again with the earth. And it is this conception of the entirely transient nature of human existence which is in harmony with what follows: "Vanity of vanities, said Koheleth; all is vanity" (xii. 8). By this utterance the whole of the book from i. 2 is, as it were, enclosed and shut in. And it should be observed that this utterance does not stand at the end of the book; a fact probably of important significance. We now, therefore, pass out of the circle enclosed by the words, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

With the ninth verse commences the *Epilogue*, xii. 9-14,

though it is not to be inferred from the use of this designation that the last portion of the book is an appendage of comparatively little importance. Probably, however, we are to regard the words of Koheleth as ending with the last clause of the eighth verse, "all is vanity." Koheleth is now *spoken of*, and even in the thirteenth verse the formula "said Koheleth" is not used. This fact is especially noteworthy. In what follows the words "all is vanity" of ver. 8, it seems not unlikely that the author designed to give the reader some indication of the structure of his book: "And moreover, since Koheleth was wise, he still further taught the people knowledge; and he gave heed and investigated: he set in order many proverbs. Koheleth sought to find pertinent words; and what was written was right, words of truth. The words of wise men are like goads, and those of the editors of collections like nails driven in: they were given by one Shepherd" (xii. 9-11). In what is said about "teaching the people knowledge," and "setting in order many proverbs," there is probably an allusion to the Book of Proverbs; but when we consider the special prominence which would thus be given to the Book of Proverbs, we may well infer that more than this was intended, and especially that the author cannot have designed to exclude the book just coming to an end. The truth would appear to be that it is with the latter that he is mainly concerned. We may infer, then, that our book was to be regarded as a collection of "the words of wise men," and as such that it was "right"; that its words were "pertinent words" and "words of truth." Its words, moreover, were to be like "nails driven in," and like "goads" given forth by "one Shepherd." But for what purpose are the goads to be employed? Whither does the Shepherd urge his flock? Is it meant that they are to be driven to a secure fold and to new pastures?

"And, further, be admonished, my son, by these: as to the making of many books there is no end; and much close study is a wearying of the flesh" (xii. 12). To understand how the philosophical part of our book was to "admonish," or "warn," we must not forget that it contains discrepant



and contradictory passages; that even its positive teaching does not appear wholly satisfactory, but that it is included within the all-encircling "vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Koheleth had sought for the supreme good in worldly things, and his temporary success had passed into despair, in the prospect of that inevitable fate which awaited him. He had seen the seasons fixed in the constitution of Nature disregarded with apparent impunity. He had witnessed oppression and suffering without redress or consolation. The place of the holy had been seen occupied by the wicked. Integrity and prudence could not secure the wise man against evil. The righteous and the unrighteous were found faring alike. God's love and hatred could be distinguished by no external manifestations. The attempt to solve the great problem presented by man's moral condition was hopeless even for the wisest. Now, if we take all this into account, it may not be difficult to understand how what had been set forth in our book was intended to "admonish" or "warn" the reader against devoting his days and nights to fruitless and unavailing study, and against "making books without end" on the attractive but impracticable problem of God and humanity. So far the lesson taught is negative, warning the reader against fruitless speculation. The concluding verses contain the positive lesson, showing that the design of the book was to direct the reader from philosophy to authority and faith. "The conclusion of the discourse, the universal law, let us hear: Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the universal law for man. For all God's work will He bring into judgment, concerning everything hidden, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (xii. 13, 14). "Fear God, and keep His commandments" was "the universal law" for which the way had been prepared by the preceding discussion. Philosophy, confessing her incompetence and weakness, retires in humble submission to Faith.

The last verse (xii. 14) probably involves the doctrine of immortality, though the language employed and the course of thought in the preceding discussion require that

its import should be regarded as different from that commonly assigned to it. Rejecting the traditional view given by the Masoretic pointing, we may regard it as referring to that "work of God" in the world which now even the wisest cannot find out (viii. 17), but which is dark and mysterious like the way of the wind and the growth of the embryo (xi. 5), and then as intimating that God will bring to light what is hidden and seemingly anomalous—will vindicate His conduct,—

"And justify the ways of God to men."

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### III.

## TRANSLATION, WITH NOTES.

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#### I.

**T**HE words of Koheleth, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

2 Vanity of vanities, said Koheleth, vanity of  
3 vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath man from  
4 all his toil which he toileth under the sun? One  
5 generation is always going, and another generation  
6 coming, but the earth abideth for ever. And the sun  
riseth and the sun setteth, and then is hastening to his  
6 place where he riseth. Going southward, and veering  
about northward, the wind veereth about continually,  
and then the wind repeateth its course according to its

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I. 1 *Koheleth*.—Introd. § 13.

2 *Said*.—Sept. εἶπεν. "Said" is to be preferred to "saith," Koheleth and his experience being placed in the past. Cp., for example, ver. 12; vii. 15; xii. 9, 10, etc. *Vanity*.—Sept. ματαιότης; Aq. ἀρμὴς or ἀρμός. Cp. note on ver. 14.

3 *From all his toil*.—More literally "in respect of all his toil." *Toil*.—The Sept. translation of עָמַל by μόχθος (in Eccl.) appears better than Aquila's κόπος. *Under the sun*.—Plumptre attributes this phrase and "seeing the sun" to Greek influence.

6 *Hastening to his place*.—Rightly regarded by the Chaldee interpreter as speaking of the sun's nocturnal journey.

6 *Going southward*, etc.—It seems preferable to connect these words with what follows rather than with the previous verse.

- 7 circuits. All the streams flow to the sea, but, as for the sea, it is not full : to the place whither the streams flow, 8 thitherward they repeat their flow. All language is exhausted ; a man cannot tell it ; the eye is not satisfied 9 in seeing, and the ear is not filled from hearing. What hath been, that it is which will be ; and what hath been done, that it is which will be done, and there is nothing 10 new under the sun. Suppose there is a thing as to which some one may say, Behold this ; it is new : it hath been 11 long ago in the olden time which was before us. There is no memorial of those who went before ; and even of those coming after, who are to be, there will be no memorial of them with those who will be afterwards.
- 12, 13 I Koheleth was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I set my heart on investigating and making search with wisdom concerning all which was done under heaven : this grievous employment hath God given to the sons

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7 *All the streams.*—The reference is probably not so much to perennial rivers as to streams intermitting with the summer's heat, such as were generally the streams of Palestine. Sept. *χελμαῖοι*. *Thitherward*.—עַם is not to be taken as equivalent to מִשָּׁם.

8 *All language.*—To render כָּל הַדְּבָרִים here by "all things" seems less suitable. Sept. *πάντες οἱ λόγοι ἔγκοποι*. *The ear is not filled*.—Obviously not because the ear can hear more, but, on the contrary, because all of Nature's multiform toil cannot be heard, since it cannot be fully told ; and, therefore, the sense of satisfaction is not felt, the hearing never being fully accomplished.

9 *What hath been done* :—or, perhaps, "What hath occurred," in accordance with the context and with the use of the Niph. of עָשָׂה in Rabbinical Hebrew. The verb as similarly used in our book does not relate exclusively to human action. Cp. viii. 16, 17.

10 *Which was before us.*—The singular הָיָה is probably used on account of bygone ages or cycles (עֲלָמִים) being conceived of together as one whole, perhaps on account of their being regarded by the Stoics as exactly resembling each other. Comp. as to the sing. verb, i. 16 ; ii. 7 ; x. 1. On ver. 9–11 see Introd. § 4, p. 15.

13 *Employment.*—עֲיִין. The word appears to denote bustling, or at least busy, employment ; Sept. *περισπασμόν*. In the Mishnah the word occurs in a weaker sense, denoting "subject," "matter," etc., e.g. *Cholin* x. 1, מִה שֶׁאָמַר בְּעֵינַי "what is said in this case." The word עָמַל, which we had in ver. 3, makes more conspicuous the grievousness or oppressiveness of labour, like our word "toil."

14 of men to busy themselves therewith. I saw all the works which were done under the sun; and lo, all was  
 15 vanity and pursuit of the wind. What is crooked cannot be straightened; and what is wanting cannot be num-  
 16 bered. I spake with my heart, saying, Lo, I have become great, and have accumulated wisdom, above all who before me were over Jerusalem; for my heart had become abundantly acquainted with wisdom and  
 17 knowledge. And I set my heart on knowing wisdom, and on knowing madness and folly: I perceived that

14 *Works which were done.*—See note on ver. 9. כְּעֵצָה is repeatedly used in the Mishnah with the sense "occurrence," "affair," etc. Cp. *c.g.* *Baba Bathra*, x. 8, כְּעֵצָה בָּא לִפְנֵי רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל, "the matter came before R. Ishmael." *Vanity and pursuit of the wind*:—הַבֵּל וּרְעוּת רוּחַ. Possibly, consistency may seem to require that we should render, either by "vanity and fruitless endeavour," or, by "vapour and pursuit of the wind," rather than transmute the metaphor in the case of one expression only. But neither of these modes of rendering seems always suitable. Sept. *ματαιότης καὶ προαίρεσις πνεύματος*. Aq. ἀτμός καὶ νομὴ ἀνέμους.

15 *Be numbered.*—This rendering of לְהִמָּנֹת has been justly felt to be not without difficulty. One would be inclined, perhaps, to adopt the translation "be supplied" or "filled up," which might be suggested by the ἀναπληρῶσαι of Symmachus. But such a rendering would be more or less conjectural. We might perhaps solve the difficulty by recognising a trace of philosophical diction, and regarding the "what is wanting" or "void" חֲסֵרוֹן, as representing the κενόν, or "void," of the Pythagoreans and other philosophers. The "void," regarded as limitless, could neither be measured nor numbered. The word "numbered" becomes especially appropriate in relation to Pythagorean doctrine. "The crooked which cannot be straightened" may suitably remind us, also, of the καμπύλον, "bent" or "crooked," and εὐθύ, "straight," in the list of Pythagorean primary contraries preserved in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, i. 5.

16 *All who before me were.*—More literally, "All which before me was." Cp. ver. 10 and note. Koheleth's predecessors would thus be conceived of together as making up one whole.

17 *And I set.*—Here we have one of the three places in which the future with *vau* converse occurs in our book, i. 17; iv. 1, 7. Driver observes, "This circumstance, estimated in the light of what is *uniformly* observable in other parts of the Old Testament, is of itself, though naturally it does not stand alone, a strong indication of the date at which that book (*i.e.* Eccl.) must have been composed," *Heb. Tenses*, p. 163, Third Ed. *Madness*.—See *Introd.* § 4, p. 20. Sept. here gives παραβολάς, possibly a corruption of παραφοράς; but it should not be forgotten that it is coupled with ἐπιστήμην, with which it is doubtful whether παραφ. would be joined.

18 even this very thing was a pursuit of the wind. For in much wisdom is much grief; and he who addeth to his knowledge addeth to his pain.

## II.

1 I said in my heart, Come now, I will test thee with mirth; and acquaint thyself with enjoyment; and, lo,  
2 that also was vanity. Of laughter I said, It is struck  
3 mad; and of mirth, What good doeth this? I revolved it in my heart to excite with wine the powers of my body, and, my heart guiding wisely, also to seize upon folly, until I should discover what is this good for the sons of men, which they may do under the heavens throughout the number of the days of their life.  
4 I engaged in great works; I built me houses; I planted  
5 me vineyards. I made me gardens and parks, and I  
6 planted in them fruit-trees of all kinds. I made me pools of water, to water therefrom the plantations of  
7 growing trees. I acquired slaves both male and female, and I had slaves who were born to me in the house; I had also possessions in herds and flocks more abundant than those of any who were before me in Jerusalem.  
8 I gathered me also silver and gold, and the treasure of

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II. 3 *To excite*.—More literally, “to draw out,” so that powers otherwise latent might be brought into activity, and pleasure rendered as intense as possible. *The powers of my body*.—Perhaps as literal a rendering of **אֶת בְּשָׂרִי** as is practicable. *This good*.—See *Introd.* § 4, p. 11.

7 The singular verb **הָיָה** in **בְּנֵי בֵית הָיָה לִי** may be accounted for on the ground of the **בְּנֵי בֵית** being conceived of collectively as property. As to there being here an indication of Greek influence, cp. *ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ἐστὶν ἀνδράποδα πενήκοντα ἢ πλείω* (Plato, *Republic*, ix. 578, E.). Cp. also i. 10 and note.

8 *Provinces*.—Cp. 1 Kings iv. 7–10. Notwithstanding that **מְדִינֹת** only has the article, it would appear that this word, as well as **מְלָכִים**, is to be taken as genitive after **סִנְלַת**: Cp. vii. 25, **רֶשֶׁעַ כָּסֶל וְהַסְכְּלוֹת**, *A wife and a harem*.—That appears to be the true explanation which regards **שִׁירָה** as identical with the Mishnic **שִׁירָה**, taken to denote a soft moveable seat or conveyance, though this would certainly not seem to be the only meaning of **שִׁירָה** in the Mishnah (e.g. *Kelim* xxii. 8). Taking the word as signifying a couch, it seems quite in accordance with the genius of the Semitic languages to suppose that it is used by Koheleth metaphorically and euphemistically of a wife, with reference merely to sexual gratifica-

kings and of the provinces : I procured me singers both male and female, and the voluptuous pleasures of the  
 9 sons of men, a wife and a harem. And I became great, and I accumulated, more than any one who had been before me in Jerusalem ; moreover my wisdom remained  
 10 with me. And nothing that my eyes desired did I keep from them ; I debarred my heart from no enjoyment ; for my heart was gladdened by all my toil ; and this was  
 11 my portion out of all my toil. And I turned to look upon all my works which my hands had wrought, and on the toil which I had toiled to accomplish ; and, lo, all was vanity and a pursuit of the wind, and there was  
 12 nothing to yield advantage under the sun. And I turned to contemplate wisdom, and madness, and folly : for what can the man do who cometh after the king ?—even  
 13 that which hath been already done. And I saw that wisdom hath as great advantage over folly, as the light  
 14 hath greater advantage than the darkness. As for the wise man, his eyes are in his head, but the fool walketh in darkness ; yet I, even I, perceived that one fate  
 15 befallerh them all. And I said in my heart, As the fate of the fool will be the fate which will befall me, even me ; and why then have I excelled in wisdom ?—and  
 16 I said in my heart that this also is vanity. For there is no memorial in perpetuity of the wise man more than of the fool, because that, in the times that are coming, all will long ago have been forgotten : and how, alas, dieth  
 17 the wise man like the fool ! And I hated life, for grievous unto me was the work which was done under

tion. This explanation seems to suit well the apposition of עֲנִיּוֹת preceding. As to Biblical Hebrew, the metaphor by which a wife is spoken of as a garment should be compared. (See Mal. ii. 16.) The diverse renderings of the Sept. *οἰνοχόον και οἰνοχόας*, and of Aq. *κυλίκιον και κυλίκια*, seem both to have underlying them the idea of “pouring out,” and thus to refer the words to the same root.

9 *Any one who had been before me.*—See note on i. 16.

11 *And I turned:*—*scil.* from mere enjoyment.

12 *What can the man do, etc.*—Probably a current proverb ; and this may be the cause of the elliptical construction in the Hebrew.

17 *Work, etc.*—See notes on i. 9, 14.

the sun : for all was vanity and a pursuit of the wind.  
 18 And I hated all my toil at which I was toiling under the  
 sun, because I should give it up to the man who shall  
 19 be after me. And who knoweth whether he will be a  
 wise man or a fool?—yet will he be master over all my  
 toil whereat I have toiled, and which I have wrought  
 20 wisely under the sun : this also was vanity. So I  
 proceeded to give my heart up to despair concerning all  
 21 the toil whereat I had toiled under the sun. For if there  
 be a man whose toil hath been wise and skilful, and  
 prosperous, yet to a man who hath not toiled at it, will  
 he have to give it, to be his portion : this also is vanity  
 22 and a great evil. For what hath man from all his toil,  
 and the striving of his heart, wherewith he toileth under  
 23 the sun ? For all his days pass in pains and in harassing  
 occupation : even in the night his heart resteth not : as  
 24 for this also, it is vanity. Good is not with the man  
 who eateth and drinketh, and causeth himself to find

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20 *To give my heart up*, etc.—Sept. τοῦ ἀπορῥῆσθαι τὴν καρδίαν μου.

22 *What hath man from all his toil?*—More literally, “What is there to man in respect of (2) all his toil?” But here, as in some other similar places, the sense is clear, and the more literal rendering is in some respects less suitable.

24 *Good is not with the man who eateth and drinketh*, etc.—See *Introd.* § 4, p. 9 *sqq.* These words may be regarded as looking back to ver. 3. The experiment did not result in the finding of the “good for the sons of men which they may do under the heavens throughout the number of the days of their life.” Thus regarded, the passage does not assert “that it is *not good* for men to eat and to drink,” etc. It denies that therein was to be found the supreme good, the *summum bonum*. No striving or toil could transform worldly things into such a perfect good, for it had been otherwise arranged by “the hand of God.” It may be added that the words of the next verse, “For who can eat?” etc., are entirely consistent with this view. Koheleth’s powers were such that, if any could have thus obtained the perfect good, surely he could have done so. If, however, altering the text, we read מִשְׂאֵנֶכָּל, and translate “There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat,” etc., ver. 25 becomes difficult of explanation. The words of this latter verse we might render more literally, “For who can eat, or who can hasten thereto *except* me?” (As to חִיִּין מִן with the sense of “except,” *Berakoth* vi. 1 may be compared לֹא חִיִּין מִן “except the wine.”) But Koheleth’s claim to pre-eminence would be the same. As to any seeming contrariety between what is said in this verse and elsewhere in our book, cp. *Introd.* § 11.



enjoyment from his toil : I saw that even this was from  
 25 the hand of God : For who can eat, or who can hasten  
 26 thereto as I do ? For to a man who is pleasing before  
 Him, hath He given wisdom, and knowledge, and  
 gladness ; but to the sinner hath He given the task of  
 gathering and amassing, in order to give to him who is  
 pleasing to God : this also is vanity and a pursuit of the  
 wind.

### III.

- 1 For everything there is an appointed time, and a season
- 2 for every matter under heaven ; A season for giving  
 birth and a season for dying ; a season for planting and
- 3 a season for rooting up what was planted ; A season for  
 slaying and a season for healing ; a season for breaking
- 4 down and a season for building ; A season for weeping  
 and a season for laughing ; a season for wailing and a
- 5 season for dancing ; A season for casting away stones  
 and a season for gathering stones together ; a season for  
 embracing and a season for keeping far from close

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26 *Hath He given.*—Notice the pret. {חָנַן}, the Divine appointments being unalterably fixed.

III. 2 *A season for giving birth.*—It may perhaps seem, at first sight, that we ought to have had, as antithesis to “a season for dying,” “a season for being born.” But the expression in the text probably has reference to the duration of pregnancy being fixed and determined by Nature. So Rashi rightly: *לחשנת חרשים*. Similarly, *a season for dying* would imply that the duration of human life is limited by Nature. Cp. Job xiv. 5, 6. *A season for planting* follows suitably, when understood of the season of the year.

3 *A season for slaying.*—What had been said of “rooting up” may have given a suggestion of warlike operations. In what is said of “healing” and “building,” there may be an allusion to the consequent peace.

4 *A season for weeping, etc.,* may be easily connected with war and peace.

5 *Casting away stones.*—This has been referred to the attempt in war to injure or destroy the value of cultivated land by casting stones upon it. Cp. 2 Kings iii. 19, 25. This explanation, however, is scarcely to be suggested with confidence ; and, perhaps, it is best to suppose that the author does not recur to the idea of war and peace before ver. 8. *For keeping far from close embrace.*—As to the sense of חִבְּק in Piel, cp. Prov. v. 20. The season spoken of is to be looked upon as determined by the appointments of Nature. Cp. Lev. xv. 24.

- 6 embrace ; A season for seeking and a season for letting go ; a season for keeping and a season for casting away ;  
 7 A season for rending and a season for sewing ; a season  
 8 for keeping silence and a season for speaking ; A season for loving and a season for hating ; a season for war and a season for peace.  
 9 What profit hath he who worketh from that whereat  
 10 he toileth ? I have seen the task which God hath given  
 11 to the sons of men to busy themselves therewith. He hath made all beautiful in its season ; also He hath set the world in their heart, so that, from the beginning even to the end, man findeth not out the work which God hath wrought.  
 12 I perceived that there is no good in them except to  
 13 enjoy and to prosper in one's life ; And also, as to all men who eat and drink, and derive enjoyment from all their toil, that it is a gift of God.  
 14 I perceived that, as to all that God doeth, it is to be for ever ; there is no making addition to it, and there is no taking away from it ; and God so arranged it, that

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6 *Letting go*.—This sense, or "giving up as lost," seems required by the antithesis. Gesenius (*Thes.*) gives the sense, "*pro amisso habuit, verloren geben.*"

8 *A season for war and a season for peace*.—This conclusion is in accordance with the supposition that in some of the earlier antitheses the author had had this contrast before his mind. As marking the conclusion of the catalogue, the substantives "war" and "peace" appropriately contrast with the verbs previously used.

11 *Beautiful*.—*הַיָּפֵה*. There is, perhaps, no sufficient reason for translating the word by "suitable" here, though this sense seems certainly required in chap. v. 18. In the Mishnah the word is used with diverse significations. Thus, in *Zabim* ii. 2, we have *בֵּין רַע בֵּין יָפֵה* "whether evil or good"; and elsewhere in various senses. Cp. *Zabim* iii. 1 ; *Makshirin* v. 10 ; *Mikva'oth* x. 6 ; *Nazir* vii. 4 ; *Zebachim* viii. 2 ; *Shebi'ith* i. 1 ; *Terumoth* ii. 4, 6 ; *Kerithuth* vi. 6 ; *et al.* The sense of the word in Eccl. v. 18 shows an approach to the Mishnic diction.

12 *In them*.—In the various pursuits, etc., specified in vers. 2-8. These are taken as making up the circle of life, that world (ver. 11) corresponding to which is man's heart. *To prosper*.—*לַעֲשׂוֹת טוֹב* "to be occupied with good." The idea of "doing good" in a moral sense appears unsuitable. The phrase is probably a Graecism—*εὖ πράττειν*.

- 15 they may fear before Him. Whatever hath been, it had been long ago before, and what is to be, already hath been; and God will seek after what hath gone before.
- 16 And further I saw under the sun the place of judgment, there was wickedness, and the place of righteousness, there was wickedness. I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a season for every matter, and for all the work there.
- 18 I said in my heart, concerning the sons of men, God meaneth to test them, and to see that they are beasts, even they themselves; For the lot of the sons of men is also the lot of beasts; and there is one lot to them; as is the death of the one, so is the death of the other; and there is one spirit to them all, and pre-eminence of man over the beasts there is none: for they are all vanity.
- 20 All are going to one place: all were from the dust; and

15 *Hath gone before.*—More literally, “is followed after,” or “is pursued.” Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, lib. xv. 181 *sqq.*, may be compared, where Pythagoras is represented as describing the course of things in the world as being like an ever-gliding river:—

“Ut unda impellitur unda,  
Urgeturque prior veniente, urgetque priorem,  
Tempora sic fugiunt pariter, pariterque sequuntur,  
Et nova sunt semper.”

Or, perhaps a still better parallel may be found in the speech of Nature herself in Lucretius iii. 977 *sqq.*

“Cedit enim rerum novitate extrusa vetustas  
Semper et ex aliis aliud reparare necesse est.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Materies opus est ut crescant postera sæcla  
Quæ tamen omnia te vita perfuncta sequuntur  
Nec minus ergo ante hæc quam tu cecidere cadentque  
Sic alid ex alio nunquam desistet oriri.”

17 *All the work*:—*scil.* of man. *There*:—in the appointed course of things (Sept. rightly ἐκεῖ). The repetition of עַתָּ לְכָל חַפֵּץ as in ver. 1 shows that the writer is referring back to vers. 1–8. This tends to confirm the view taken of כֹּחַ in ver. 12.

19 *The lot of*, etc.—Sept. well: συνάντημα νῶν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κ.τ.λ. If we retain the pointing מִקְרָה we may regard the word as still having its infinitival force and governing the accusative בְּנֵי הָאָדָם. This would not be unprecedented. An obvious example is furnished by מִקְרָא as an infinitive, “to call” (Num. x. 2), while elsewhere the word denotes “an assembly.” There is, probably, the same construction in Isa. iii. 21, מַעֲרֵטָה. The rendering “men are a chance,” etc., even if it were otherwise suitable, would seem to be precluded by the ל in מִלֵּה. Sept. συνάντημα ἐν αὐτοῖς.

- 21 all are returning to the dust. Who knoweth as to the spirit of the sons of men whether it goeth up on high, or as to the spirit of the beasts whether it goeth down  
 22 beneath to the earth? And I saw that there is nothing better than that man should be glad in his works, for that is his portion; for who will bring him to look on what will be after him?

## IV.

- 1 And, again, I saw all the acts of oppression which were being wrought under the sun; and lo, there was the tear of the oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of those oppressing them there was  
 2 might; but they had no comforter. And I pronounced the dead who had already died more fortunate than the  
 3 living who were still alive, And more blessed than both, him who had not yet existed, who had not seen the grievous work which was wrought under the sun.  
 4 And I observed as to all toilsome yet prosperous work, that hence ariseth one man's being envied by another: this also is vanity and a pursuit of the wind.  
 5 The fool foldeth his hands, and eateth his own flesh:

21 *Whether it goeth up, etc.*—Taking the ה in העלה and הירדת as the interrogative. It appears, however, not impossible to regard the ה as the article, if, in accordance with the primary signification of ירע, we take מי יורע in the sense "Who discerneth?" The verse may then be translated, "Who discerneth the spirit of the sons of men, that which goeth up on high, or the spirit of the beasts, that which goeth down beneath to the earth?" With "that which goeth up," and "that which goeth down," we should have to understand "as they say." The general sense would thus be the same.

IV. 1 On the relation of this verse and of chap. v. 3 to Psalm lxxiii., see *Introduct.* § 9.

2 *The dead who had already died, etc.*—As to the question whether Ecclesiastes can be rightly called "pessimistic," it may be said that when, as here, a negative value is given to life, the word, in accordance with ordinary usage, is suitably employed. Plumptre seems to have regarded this pessimism as exhibiting Greek influence, and he may be right. As to "The Melancholy of the Greeks," the reader may consult the chapter so entitled in Butcher's *Aspects of the Greek Genius*, where many references may be found.

5 *Eateth his own flesh*:—becomes emaciated.

- 6 Better is a handful with quietness, than the two hands full, with toil and a pursuit of the wind.
- 7, 8 And, again, I saw vanity under the sun. There is one, but there is not a second; moreover he hath neither son nor brother; and there is no end to all his toil; also his eye is not satisfied with riches; but for whom am I toiling, and depriving myself of enjoyment?
- 9 this also is vanity, and it is a grievous business. Two are better than one, because they have a good reward
- 10 from their toil. For if they fall, the one will raise up his companion; but woe to the one who falleth when
- 11 there is not a second to raise him up. Also, if two lie down, then they are warm; but, as for one, how can he
- 12 be warm? And, if one should overpower a man, two can withstand the attack; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
- 13 Better is a youth, poor but wise, than a king old and foolish, who hath no longer the sense to accept admo-

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6 The words *a handful* and *the two hands full* scarcely express adequately the difference between כַּף כִּלְאָ and חֲפָנִים, the first of which expressions would properly denote the palm or hollow of the hand filled, and the latter, probably, as much as could be grasped by the two hands made into a ball (cp. Fuerst. *Lex. s. v.* חֲפָנִים). It would be allowable, in point of grammar, to translate, "Better is a handful of quiet than two hands full of toil," etc., but such a use of metaphorical language would be excessively strained. It is probably better to take נַחַח, etc., as adverbial accusatives with the sense given above.

8 *His eye*,—according to the Keri; but the Kethib, which gives the dual, is possibly correct. Cp. x 12, and note.

9 *Two*:—literally "the two" (הַשְׁנַיִם). So also "the one" (הַאֶחָד), the article making more prominent the idea of mere number, the contrast between one as such and more than one as such.

12 It would seem that הָאָדָם must be taken as the subject of the verb preceding; that the suffix in יִקְפֹּץ must be regarded as an indefinite pronoun, "a man," "any one," while that in יִנָּדֶה is taken as referring back to הָאָדָם. The use of the suffix with the weakened force of an indefinite pronoun need not cause much difficulty in view of some other passages in the book.

13 *Better, etc.*:—meaning, probably, "would be better fitted to govern"; but there is no indication that the youth was conceived of as ousting the old and foolish king, or even as succeeding to the throne. In Mishnah (*Horaioth* iii. 8) it is laid down that even a bastard, if wise and

14 nition: For out of the prison-house he went forth to  
 15 reign; for also in his reign ariseth poverty. I saw all  
 the living that walk under the sun, with the second  
 16 child, who is to stand in their stead. There is no end to  
 all the people: as to all that was before them, even those  
 who come after rejoice not therein; so that this also is  
 vanity and a pursuit of the wind.

# V.

1 Take heed to thy steps when thou goest to the House  
 of God; for more acceptable is it to draw nigh to hear,

instructed in Jewish learning, takes precedence of a plebeian high priest, that is, a high priest unskilled in the learning of the schools (כהן גדול עם הארץ). Various attempts at historical identification have been made with respect to the youth and the old and foolish king, but none, so far as I know, has any probability.

14 *For out of the prison-house, etc.; for also in his reign, etc.*—Here are two reasons for what had been said in the previous verse: first, the old king, in his self-willed isolation, casts off all restraint, like one coming out of a prison; and, secondly, through the lack of wisdom displayed in his reckless conduct, his subjects become poor. *Poverty ariseth*:—or, more literally, “the poor is born,” נולד רש. Here, again, we may recognise an approach to the Mishnic diction. Illustrative passages may be found in *Nedarim* ix. 2, where נולד is used of that which *ariseth* afterwards; *Temurah* iii. 5, אף על פי שנולד להם מום “although they may have contracted a blemish”; more literally, “although a blemish may have *arisen* in them”; *Terumoth* viii. 8, *al*.

15 *All the living, etc.*:—meaning, evidently, all the population of the earth. But this has something of hyperbole even for philosophical contemplation. *The second child*.—The more comprehensive Hebrew word ילד translated here “child” is identical with that rendered youth in ver. 13. If identity of rendering is insisted on, “child” may be given, as does A. V., in both places. The only practicable way of explaining “the second child” here would seem to be to take the expression as meaning the second generation. *In their stead*—or, “instead.” But the transition in the use of singular and plural in the book is such that the suffix in תחתיו need occasion no difficulty; and probably the generation “walking under the sun” is taken collectively. In the *second* generation the population is supposed to become entirely changed.

16 *There is no end to all the people, etc.*:—suggested, as seems altogether likely, by Job xxi. 33, where the race of men is similarly regarded as flowing on in endless succession, without limit or number. *Even those who come after*.—Having regard to the גם, perhaps we ought to translate “even those who come *next*.”

V. 1 (IV. 17 Heb.). *They mean not to do evil*.—The construction of the

- than for fools to offer a sacrifice, though they mean not  
 2 to do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not  
 thy heart hasten to utter a word before God ; for God is  
 in heaven, and thou upon earth ; therefore let thy words  
 3 be few. For, as a dream cometh, attended with much  
 commotion, so cometh a fool's voice with a multitude of  
 4 words. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not  
 to pay it ; for He hath no pleasure in fools : what thou  
 5 vowest, pay. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow,  
 6 than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Allow not  
 thy mouth to make thy body sin ; and say not before  
 the Angel, It was an error : why should God be angry  
 7 at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands ? For,  
 as in a multitude of dreams, there are vanities, so also  
 is it with an abundance of words ; but fear thou God.  
 8 If thou seest in a country the oppression of the poor  
 and the perversion of right and justice, marvel not at the  
 matter ; for One higher than the high observeth, and

Hebrew here יודעים לעיות רע has occasioned difficulty to some of the commentators. An error in the text need not be thought of. The construction of ידע followed by an infinitive with ל may be regarded as characteristic of our book, occurring also in iv. 13, and x. 15. There is a well-known Greek construction in which εἰδέναι is followed by an infinitive meaning "to know how to do," etc. The Sept. here renders, οἱ οὐκ εἰδόντες εἰδότες τοῦ ποιῆσαι κακόν. The author of our book may be supposed to have had this or an analogous form of expression in his mind. "They know not how to do evil" may be referred to the extreme fatuity of the "fools" spoken of, or better, perhaps, as "they do not knowingly do evil," "they mean not to do evil." There may be a latent allusion to 1 Sam. xv. 22.

3 *With much commotion.*—Such a rendering as "through the multitude of business" creates a discord between the two members of the verse. ברכ ענין is intended, probably, to represent the multiplicity of images and confused action of a troubled dream. This sense of ענין would easily connect itself with that of "busy employment."

6 *The Angel.*—See Introd. § 10.

8 *A country.*—As this verse seems certainly to look back to iv. 1, "where all the acts of oppression wrought under the sun" are spoken of, "a country" is, probably, to be preferred to "a province." In the Mishnah (e.g. *Maasar Sheni* iii. 4) מדינה is used of the *country* as distinguished from *Jerusalem*. Similarly we distinguish between the metropolis and the *provinces*.

- 9 there are powers high above them. And as to the produce gained from the land, it is shared among all; the  
 10 king is dependent on the field. He who loveth silver is not satisfied with silver, nor he who delighteth in  
 11 abundance, with increase: this also is vanity. When wealth increaseth, they increase who eat it: and what advantage hath the owner thereof, except the beholding  
 12 with his eyes? Sweet is the sleep of the labourer, whether he eat little or much; but, as to the satiety of the rich man, it doth not allow him to fall asleep.  
 13 There is a distressing evil which I saw under the  
 14 sun; wealth kept by its owner to his injury. And that wealth perished in a grievous manner; for he begat a  
 15 son, and there was nothing in his hand. As he came forth from his mother's womb naked, so shall he go back again, as he came; and he shall take nothing from  
 16 his toil which he can carry with him in his hand. And this also is a distressing evil; that altogether as he came, so he should go; and what profit is it to him that he  
 17 should labour for the wind? Also all his days he eateth in darkness, and suffereth much vexation, and endureth affliction and anger.  
 18 Lo, that is what I have seen good, what I have seen

<sup>9</sup> *Dependent on the field*:—or, if we translate with the A. V., “served by the field,” the general sense of the passage will be the same.

<sup>10</sup> *Increase*.—So A. V. renders תבואה; and this is, perhaps, as good a rendering as is practicable. The “increase” of the fields in corn may be especially intended. Cp. *Kelaim* ii. 8, “A place is not given to mustard close to a field of corn (תבואה).”

<sup>14</sup> *In a grievous manner*:—somewhat more literally, “in a grievous business.”

<sup>15</sup> *Naked*, etc. —Cp. note on vi. 4.

<sup>17</sup> *All his days*:—that is, probably, all his (the father's) days after the son had squandered the father's property. *Eateth*:—liveth, life being represented by one of the principal actions connected therewith. Such a mode of speaking seems to be in harmony with the philosophical style of our author. What is said of “eating” in ii 25; vi. 2, may be compared. *In darkness*:—expressive, perhaps, of the obscurity of the condition to which he is reduced. *Endureth affliction*.—If we take חלי as equivalent to חלי, then it would seem that the suffix must be supplied with קצף.

<sup>18</sup> *Lo, that is what I have seen good*, etc.—What had just been said, it is



suitable, to eat, and to drink, and to experience enjoyment from all one's toil which he toileth under the sun, during the number of the days of his life, which God hath given  
 19 him, for that is his portion. Also as to every man to whom God hath given wealth and treasures, and hath given to him power to eat therefrom, and to receive his portion, and to rejoice in his toil; as to this, it is the gift  
 20 of God; So that he remembereth not much the days of his life, for God is making answer to the joy of his heart.

## VI.

1 There is an evil which I saw under the sun; and a  
 2 heavy affliction was it unto men; A man to whom God giveth wealth, and treasures, and honour, so that he lacketh nothing for himself of all which he desireth; yet God doth not give him power to eat therefrom, but a stranger eateth it; as for this it is vanity and a grievous  
 3 affliction. If a man should beget a hundred, and live many years, so that the days of his years should be abundant; yet if his soul be not satisfied with good, and if also he hath not possessed a sepulchre, I said that an  
 4 abortion is better than he. For he came in vanity, and he goeth away in darkness; and his name will be covered

urged, affords an illustration showing that the enjoyment of good is not to be postponed, and referring back, as it would appear, to iii. 12, 13. Notice that, through the mouth of Koheleth, a voice seems here to speak different from that which had spoken just before. See Introd. § 13. *Suitable*.—On **יִפּ** see note on iii. 11.

20 *He remembereth not*, etc.:—i.e., he to whom so happy a lot has fallen, and whose days glide by in calm enjoyment, with little to distinguish one from another. See Introd. § 4, p. 24. *For God is making answer to the joy of his heart*:—or, “with the joy of his heart”; a rendering in some respects preferable. See Introd. § 4, p. 25. The second **כִּי** is, probably, to be thus explained: “His days pass by so tranquilly, *for* he has attained consummate happiness, a felicity answering to the divine.”

**VI. 2** *To eat therefrom*:—to enjoy what he possesses.

3 *Not satisfied with good*:—on account, probably, of inordinate cupidity. *Not possessed a sepulchre*,—in his lifetime, which sepulchre, after his death, might prevent his name from being “covered with darkness.”

4 *In vanity*:—naked and empty-handed. Cp. chap. v. 15, with regard to which, as also this place, some allusion to what is said in Job (cp. i. 21; iii. 16) has been justly recognised. I do not see how **הַנֶּפֶל** can be made the subject in this and the following verse. Probably, however, the language

- 5 with darkness. Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor  
 6 known rest, even he more than the other. Even if a  
 man hath lived a thousand years twice told, but hath  
 not had experience of good; are not all going to one  
 place?
- 7 All man's toil is for his mouth, yet his soul is not  
 8 filled. For what advantage hath the wise over the fool?  
 or what over even the poor man who knoweth how to  
 9 walk before the living? Better is the sight of the eyes  
 than the agitation of the soul: this also is vanity and a  
 pursuit of the wind.
- 10 As to what hath been, his name was given to him  
 long ago, and it was known that he is Man; and he  
 11 cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he. Since  
 there are things in abundance which increase vanity,  
 12 what advantage is it to man? For who knoweth what  
 is good for man in life, during the number of the days  
 of his vain life, so that he may make them like the  
 shadow, since who can tell a man what will be after  
 him under the sun?

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used is designed to refer to *both* the abortion and the person whose case is supposed, or at least this person is spoken of in language which, for the most part, would appropriately describe the abortion and its fate.

5 *He hath not seen the sun.*—Perhaps there may be implied here, and in the comparison with the abortion, a philosophical contempt for the mere *χρηματιστής* and the man inordinately occupied with worldly and material acquisition.

8 *Even the poor man.*—The construction in the Hebrew is pretty clearly elliptical, so that the poor man is regarded as in a specially disadvantageous position.

9 *This also is vanity:*—to be referred, probably, to “the sight of the eyes,” and not to “the agitation of the soul” through unsatisfied desire.

10 *He is Man.*—הוּא אָדָם, with reference, probably, to the narrative in Gen. ii., meaning that man's name, *adam*, appropriately expresses his feeble nature, since he was moulded in dust or earth (*aphar min haadamah*). *Cannot contend.*—Taking into account what has just been said, it appears probable that, in לָרִין וְנָוִי, there is an allusion to Gen. vi. 3. The הוּא בָּשָׂר in the latter passage should also be taken into account.

12 *Make them like the shadow:*—attain great longevity, his days being lengthened out as a shadow is by the setting sun. Cp. vii. 15; viii. 13. It cannot be maintained that there is here a Graecism=ποιεῖν χόρνον.

## VII.

- 1 Better is a good name than fragrant ointment, and
- 2 the day of death than the day of one's birth. Better
- is it to go to the house of mourning than to go to the
- banqueting-house; for the former is the end of all men,
- 3 and the living will lay it to his heart. Better is sorrow
- than laughter, for, with a gloomy countenance, the heart
- 4 becometh better. The heart of wise men is in the house
- of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of
- 5 mirth. Better is it to hear the rebuke of a wise man than
- 6 for a man to hear the song of fools. For as the noise of
- the thorns under the pot, such is the laughter of the
- 7 fool: this also is vanity. For the infliction of pain
- maketh a wise man shine forth, but a gift corrupteth

VII. 1 *A good name*:—שם. It is worthy of observation that the Stoics, according to Diog. Laert. vii. 102, placed a good reputation (*eudoxia*) among things indifferent (*oûdêrepa*), that is, things neither good nor evil, though of such things some were to be preferred to others. The influence of Stoicism on the teaching of this seventh chapter is conspicuous. (Cp. *Introd.* § 4.) *Of one's birth*:—הולדו. The suffix has here again (cp. note on iv. 12) the weakened force of an indefinite pronoun. Delitzsch seems to regard the expression of preference for the day of death as more suitable to a Greek than to an Israelite.

2 *Banqueting-house*.—Probably, however, we ought to understand the *beth mishteh* of the house where a *marriage feast* is celebrated.

6-7 The sixth verse may be regarded as parenthetical, and the כִּי of ver. 7 ("For the infliction, etc.") as looking back to ver. 5. The article in העשן may then be regarded as referring to the נטרת חכם. The Poel verb יהולל appears to have the meaning of "making manifest," "causing to shine forth," or "giving lustre," which last sense was adopted by Desvœux. The connection makes improbable the rendering of the A. V. "maketh a wise man mad," and the balance between the two members of the verse is thus destroyed. As to the employment of יהולל in Job xii. 17 and Isa. xlv. 25, it may be said that the sense of "making manifest," "bringing to light," "causing to shine forth," the real character of the persons spoken of is not unsuitable. Cp. *Introd.* § 18. *The infliction of pain*:—more literally, "the pressure" or "constraint" *scil.* put upon a man's tendencies and inclinations. *A gift corrupteth*, etc.—It may seem that there is here little congruity with ver. 5. But it should be remembered that "*hearing the song of fools, and obtaining a gift,*" may be taken as diverse modes of *receiving pleasure*. Here, as elsewhere (cp. chap. x. *passim*), the author of Ecclesiastes is, probably, arranging proverbial dicta of Jewish philosophers, with reference to their inner kernel of meaning, not their outward form (cp. xii. 9).

- 8 the heart. Better is the end of a thing than its beginning; better is the man of patient spirit than the man of  
 9 proud spirit. Be not hasty to indulge anger in thy  
 10 spirit, for anger dwelleth in the bosom of fools. Say  
 not, How was it that the former days were better than  
 these? —for thou hast not asked wisely concerning this.  
 11 Wisdom is as good as an inheritance, and better too to  
 12 those who see the sun. For wisdom serveth as a protection,  
 and money serveth as a protection; but knowledge hath an advantage;  
 wisdom preserveth in life those who possess it.  
 13 Behold the work of God; for who can straighten what  
 14 He hath made crooked? In the day of prosperity enjoy thyself;  
 but, in the day of adversity, behold. God, indeed, hath set the one  
 corresponding to the other,  
 15 because man findeth nothing after him. I saw all in the

9 It would certainly appear that the כֶּעָם contrasted with שְׂחֹק in ver. 3 is not to be identified with the כֶּעָם of ver. 9. The latter, which rests "in the bosom of fools," is that irritation of mind which is opposed to resignation and calm submission.

11 *As good as an inheritance.*—As to the sense of עַם cp. ii. 16.

12 *Wisdom serveth as a protection.*—It would scarcely suit to translate with greater literality, "Wisdom is in the character of a shadow." The connection of the ideas of "shadow" and "protection" is sufficiently familiar to the Biblical student; no references are required. *Preserveth in life:*—by imparting a knowledge of the world and of the conditions of life; or, perhaps, as the A. V., "giveth life," if we understand the words as referring to the higher intellectual life of the חֲכָמִים, living in a world above that of common men (עַם הָאָרֶץ). Cp. vi. 5 and note.

14 *The one corresponding to the other.*—Sept. *συν τούτοις συμφώνως τούτοις*. Probably there is underlying the words וְהָיָה לְעֵמֶת וְהָיָה the conception of life as a path, on the opposite sides of which, and parallel to one another, stand the circumstances of prosperity and adversity, the things good and the things evil, which each man has to encounter. If life was thus conceived of, we may be enabled better to understand the *all* of ver. 18, "He who feareth God will come forth from them *all*." Cp. *Introd.* § 4, p. 18. *Man findeth nothing after him.* Cp. the last words of chap. iii.

15 *I saw all:*—meaning, probably, all of man's earthly life, or especially, all relating thereto which was seemingly crooked and abnormal. *My vanity.*—While I was seeking for satisfaction in worldly things, or, perhaps better, before I had given up as hopeless the attempt to solve the problems connected with man's earthly condition. *Sometimes.*—More literally, "there is," i.e., "it occurs in the world." *In his righteousness.*—Or, perhaps, "by his righteousness," "by his wickedness."

days of my vanity : sometimes a righteous man perisheth in his righteousness, and sometimes a wicked man  
 16 prolongeth his life in his wickedness. Be not righteous  
 overmuch, neither make thyself out exceedingly wise :  
 17 why shouldest thou be struck with dismay ? Be not  
 wicked overmuch, neither be thou foolish : why shouldest  
 18 thou die before thy time ? It is well that thou shouldest  
 take hold of the one admonition, and, also, from the  
 other, decline not thy hand ; for he who feareth God will  
 19 come forth from them all. Wisdom hath, with regard  
 to the wise man, a power greater than ten rulers which  
 20 were in the city. For there is not a righteous man on  
 21 earth who doeth well, and sinneth not. Moreover, do  
 not pay attention to all the words which people speak,  
 22 lest thou hear thy servant reviling thee. For thy heart  
 knoweth that thou, even thou, hast many times also  
 23 reviled others. All this I tested by wisdom : I said, I  
 24 will be wise ; but it was too far off for me. That which  
 was far off and exceedingly deep, who could find it out ?  
 25 I proceeded, I and my heart, to know, and to explore,  
 and to seek out wisdom and a plan, and to know the

16 *Struck with dismay*.—Possibly said with a special reference to Job xl. 3-5 and xlii. 1-6.

19 *Hath a power*, etc.—Better than “strengtheneth.” Aquila’s ἐνισχύσει is preferable to the βοηθήσει of the Sept. ἐνισχύω with the sense “be strong in,” “prevail in,” and followed by ἐν or the dative, would be very good. (Cp. *Nic. Eth.* X. ix. 14.) Wisdom is conceived of as a ruler dominating in the citadel of the wise man’s soul. *Ten*.—A full number : cp. Gen. xxxi. 7 ; Job xix. 3. In the Mishnah (*Megilah* i. 3), a great city is defined as one in which there are *ten* men of leisure. Ten men were required for the formation of a synagogue.

23 *All this*.—meaning, probably, what had been said in vii. 1-22, and which may be taken as said in answer to the questions with which the sixth chapter closes. *It*.—wisdom חכמה, as shown by the feminines ויהי and רחוקה.

24 *That which was far off*.—רחוק מה שהיה. It should be remembered that Koheleth is narrating his *past* experience. *Exceedingly deep*.—Cp. Job xxviii. and *Intro.* § 8.

25 *I and my heart*.—Probably to be understood as meaning, “I, summoning all my powers to the task.” *A plan*.—i.e., of the moral administration of the world. The idea represented by חשבון is probably *the thought underlying and manifested in the condition of man viewed as the subject of a*

26 depravity of obduracy and folly, even madness. And I find a more bitter thing than death, the woman who, as to her heart, is nets and snares, whose hands are bonds : he who is pleasing to God will escape from her ;  
 27 but the sinner will be caught by her. See, this I found, said Koheleth, considering one by one, to find a plan :  
 28 Which my soul hath up to this time sought, but I have not found : one man out of a thousand I found, but a

*moral government.* Similarly, if we take the word in the same sense, we shall have in ix. 10, first, מעשה, "work" or "action," and then חשבון, "device," or "plan." From the use of חשב to denote "weaving," the transition is easy to the idea of "devising" or "planning." The passage, 2 Chron. xxvi. 15 is here instructive. The word חשבון appears to have the sense of "plan" also in the Mishnah, *Aboth* iv. 22, לפי שהכל לפי דעתו, which may be translated, "And know that all will be according to the plan." This sense may be defended to some extent on account of what precedes, but more particularly from what follows : "And let not thy thoughts cause thee to trust that Sheol will be a place of refuge for thee, since without thy consent thou art created, and without thy consent thou art born, and without thy consent thou diest, and without thy consent thou wilt undergo judgment, and render up an account (ליתן דין) before the King of the kings of kings, the Holy One ; blessed be He." With respect to the use of חשבון to denote the account to be rendered to God, the word may be looked upon as pointing to the thoughts underlying a man's actions, the reason why he acted as he has done. This use is thus not repugnant to its employment to denote "a plan." Stoical influence is, probably, to be detected in *Aboth* iv. 21, 22, as in the words of Ecclesiastes. *The depravity of obduracy and folly.*—רשע כסל והסכלות As to the Article, cp. ii. 8.

26 *Nets and snares, etc.*—Said, perhaps, not only with a general allusion to *Weiberlist*, but our author may have had in his mind several particulars given concerning Samson and Delilah. See *Introd.* § 12.

27 *Considering one by one.*—The word "considering," it would appear, must be supplied from what had been previously said. *One by one.*—אחת לאחת. This may be understood as representing *ἐν καθ' ἑν*, in Hebrew the feminine naturally taking the place of the neuter. This is, probably, to be preferred to the view that the feminine is employed on account of the special prominence given to women in what precedes and in what follows. Ginsburg seems to take a view more or less analogous to that just suggested, when he translates, "taking one thing by one to find the result." Cp. *Job* ix. 3, 21.

28 *One man out of a thousand.*—See *Introd.* § 15. According to Plumptre, in the very unfavourable opinion of the character of woman here expressed, "we have an echo of the darker side of Greek thought."

- 29 woman in all these I found not. Only see, this I found, that God had made man upright, but they had sought out many inventions.

## VIII.

- 1 Who is as the wise man ? and who as he that knoweth the explanation of a thing ? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the sternness of his countenance is changed.
- 2 I say : Observe the king's commandment, and that on
- 3 account of the oath of God. Be not in haste to go from before him ; persist not in an evil thing ; for he doeth

<sup>29</sup> *Many inventions*.—Probably meaning the devices and contrivances (חִשְׁבֹּנוֹת) of civilisation, regarded as marking degeneracy from a primitive state of natural simplicity and purity. The reader need scarcely be reminded how, in the golden age of the classic poets, neither plough furrowed the soil, nor ship traversed the ocean. And, indeed, upon the supposition that man was bound to conform to the ordinances of Nature, and to submit unreservedly to her restraints, it is not difficult to see how agriculture, navigation, and other arts might be regarded as evidences of moral debasement. Accordingly Horace, after speaking of the first navigator's fortitude and audacity, says :—

“ Nequicquam Deus absceidit  
 Prudens Oceano dissociabili  
 Terras, si tamen impiæ  
 Non tangenda rates transiliunt vada.  
 Audax omnia perpeti  
 Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas.”

*Carm. i. 3.*

VIII. 1 *As he that knoweth*, etc.—That the preposition כ is to be supplied from what goes before is clear. *The sternness of his countenance*.—עַל פָּנָיו, denoting the stern, grave countenance and rigid features of the man eagerly pursuing an investigation, or bent on finding the solution of a difficult problem. Cp. הָעֵזָה פָּנֶיהָ in Prov. vii. 13, an expression intended probably to denote the fixed, amorous gaze of the “strange woman.” Cp. also Prov. xxi. 29.

2 *I say*, etc.—Rather than resort to critical conjecture, it seems preferable to suppose an ellipsis. Any resulting difficulty may be, perhaps, lessened, if we regard this as the commencement of a new speech in the קוֹל חֲכָמִים of which *Kohaleth* is the personification (cp. *Introd.* § 13). *The king's commandment*,—or, with Ewald, “den Mund des Königs.” As to this and what follows, cp. *Introd.* § 4, p. 18.

3 *Be not in haste*, etc.—An injunction to the practice of respect and reverence (cp. x. 4). It would certainly appear, however, that the king here spoken of is *ideal*, the embodiment or personification of law, and the

- 4 whatsoever he pleaseth. Because the king's word is with authority, and who can say unto him, What doest thou? He who observeth what is commanded hath experience of no evil thing, and the heart of the wise man discerneth both season and law.
- 6 Since for every matter there is a season and a law, the
- 7 misery of man is great upon him. For he knoweth not what will be; for when it will be, who can tell him?
- 8 There is no man having power over the wind, so as to hold in the wind; and there is no control over the day of death; and there is no discharge in war; and wickedness will not deliver those who commit it.

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representative of God, who, according to Stoic doctrine, was himself Eternal Law. This view may derive increased credibility from the extent to which the ideal enters into the description of the king in *Sanhedrin* ii. 2-5, where the king is described as neither judging nor judged. He is free from the Levirate law. None may marry his widow. If one of his relations dies, he must not leave the palace to join the funeral procession. None but himself may ride on his horse, sit on his throne, or handle his sceptre. None may look upon him when naked, or while at the bath. (The dissenting decisions of individual authorities we need not here consider.) The presence of the ideal can scarcely be denied, however much of these details may have been actually followed out with regard to an Oriental king. The quasi-divine character of the king appears also conspicuous. The high priest, however, partook of the nature of man, and represented man (*Heb. v. 1*); and the law of the Mishnah in his case (*Sanhedr. ii. 1*) differs greatly from that laid down with respect to the king: "The high priest judges and is judged," etc.

5 *Season and law.*—The *לש* or "season," as ordered by the Eternal Reason of the Stoics, became an ordinance (*לשון*) or "law" for the regulation of human conduct.

6-8 In these verses we have, vividly depicted, that fear and perturbation of mind from which, according to the Stoics, the wise man enjoyed the great privilege of being free. He gained this reward for his conformity to the eternal law of Nature.

6 *Great upon him.*—Presses upon him like a heavy burden.

7 *He knoweth not what will be, etc.*—Expressive of the consciousness of guilt, and fear of punishment. *When it will be:*—or, possibly, "how it will be."

8 *Having power over the wind.*—There may be here a play on the two senses of *רוח* "wind" and "spirit." In Stoic phraseology the soul of man was a *πνεῦμα ἐνθέρμον*. *There is no discharge in war* has apparently a similar double meaning, and is thus used with reference to the last conflict, the death-agony.



- 9 I saw all this, and I gave my heart to all work which was done under the sun: there was a season when  
 10 man ruled over man to his injury. And then I saw the wicked buried; and they had come, and from the place of the holy they went; and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this also is vanity.  
 11 Because the sentence against the evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men  
 12 within them is fully determined on doing evil. Although the sinner doeth evil a hundred times, and prolongeth his days, yet surely I know that it will be well with  
 13 those who fear God, who fear before Him. But it will not be well with the wicked man, neither will he lengthen out his days like the shadow; because he feareth not before God.  
 14 There is vanity which is wrought on the earth, that there are righteous men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, and that there are wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the  
 15 righteous: I said that this also is vanity. And I commended enjoyment, because there is nothing good for man under the sun, except to eat, and to drink, and to

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10 *Buried*.—Not cast out to the dogs and vultures. *They had come, and from the place of the holy they went*:—implying that there was no apparent break or disruption of the usual course of things at the departure of the wicked rulers. Neither God nor man so interposed as to eject them from “the place of the holy.” Notice how well the future יהלכו agrees with this idea of a general continuity. A somewhat similar remark may be made with respect to the וישתכחו following. “And they became gradually forgotten.” The variant reading וישתבחו (Sept. *καὶ ἐπὶπρέθσαν*) “and they were praised” is, if less probable, not inconsistent with the general view just suggested. The imperfection of law would still be conspicuous. *Where they had so done*:—or, “that they had so done.” *This also is vanity*.—That the abnormal and wicked conduct of the rulers, when in “the place of the holy,” should even become forgotten, showed how imperfect was the reign of law. Knobel remarks that appearing before a court of justice was regarded as appearing before God, and cites Deut. xix. 17, etc. Cp. Introd. § 4, p. 19.

14 *This also is vanity*.—These words are appropriately used, as the statement with regard to imperfection attending the operation of law had been in this verse advanced still further.

enjoy ; for this will abide with him in his toil, during the days of his life, which God hath given him under the sun.

- 16 When I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to see the busy work which was carried on upon the earth—for indeed neither by day nor night doth it see sleep  
17 with its eyes—Then I saw as to all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work which is done under the sun, because that, though man should toil in seeking it, yet will he not find it out; and, even if the wise man should think to know it, he will not be able to find it

## IX.

- 1 out. For I laid all this to my heart, even to investigate all this, that the righteous and the wise, and their works,

16 *Neither by day nor night doth it see sleep with its eyes.*—It would certainly appear that these words are not to be understood of man's persistent application to toil for the sake of gain or for the means of subsistence, but rather of the entirety of action proceeding in the world, and comprehending the work of God in relation to man; and that "the busy work" *הענין* thus conceived of is said, by a bold metaphor, never to "see sleep with its eyes." The supposition that the Divine work just mentioned is even principally referred to, accords with what follows, and with what had been said before, ver. 12-15. The reader may compare with the sixteenth and seventeenth verses the Erdgeist's description of his activity in Goethe's *Faust* :—

" In Lebensfluten,  
Im Thatensturm,  
Wall'ich auf und ab,  
Webe hin und her  
Geburt und Grab,  
Ein ewiges Meer,  
Ein wechselnd Weben  
Ein glühend Leben;

So schaff'ich am sausendem Webstuhl der Zeit,  
Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid ;"

And the words with which the Erdgeist, before vanishing, answers Faust :—

" Du gleichst dem Geist den du begreifst,  
Nicht mir."

IX. 1 Koheleth had to grapple with two seemingly conflicting conclusions: on the one hand, that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God; on the other that their earthly lot afforded no indication of either His love or His hatred. *In all that is before them.*—or, "as to all that is before them," taking *לפניהם הכל* as an adverbial accusative, which is, apparently, the only practicable construction.

- are in the hand of God, yet men discern neither love nor  
 2 hatred in all that is before them. All is alike to all :  
 there is one lot to the righteous and to the wicked, to  
 the good and to the pure, and to him that is defiled, and  
 to him who sacrificeth, and to him who sacrificeth not ;  
 as is the good man, so is the sinner ; he who sweareth as  
 3 he who feareth an oath. This is evil in all that is  
 done under the sun, that there is one lot to all ; therefore,  
 indeed, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and  
 madness is in their heart during their life ; and afterwards  
 4 they go to the dead. For to one who is in company  
 with all the living there is confidence ; for, even a living  
 5 dog, he is better than the dead lion. For the living  
 know that they will die ; but, as for the dead, they know  
 not anything, and they have no further reward ; for the  
 6 memory of them is forgotten. Their love, as well as  
 their hatred and their envy, hath long ago perished, and  
 they have no more for ever a part in anything that is  
 done under the sun.
- 7 Go, eat thy bread with gladness, and drink thy wine  
 with a merry heart ; for long ago hath God approved thy  
 8 works. At every season let thy garments be white, and

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<sup>3</sup> *That is done* :—or, “that occurs,” as before. Cp. ver. 6. *Afterwards*.—**אחרי**. The suffix has here undergone a further weakening, as compared with passages previously noticed. Hitzig compares Jer. li. 46, and illustrates by *nachdem*, *nachher*.

<sup>4</sup> *In company with* :—or, “associated with,” adopting, as more probable, the *Keri*, which has the support of the Sept. *ὅτι τις ὅς κοινωνεῖ*, κ.τ.λ. *All the living*.—The “all” is not superfluous, but points to the abundance of life around, as promoting the confidence spoken of.

<sup>6</sup> *Anything that is done* :—or, “that occurreth,” rendering the pret. **נַעֲשֶׂה** here as before in this chapter (ver. 3), by the present, as though it were **נַעֲשֶׂה**. This can scarcely be avoided, though the pret. is probably still used, on account of the experience of Koheleth being placed in the past. See i. 2, note. But as the state of things in the world, as described by Koheleth, still continued, it is not wonderful that we should find some indications more appropriate to the present time, as in ver. 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Long ago hath God approved thy works*.—Probably said in marked contradiction of the doctrine of future rewards and punishments.

<sup>8</sup> *At every season may be understood* as opposed to any custom requiring abstinence from the wearing of white garments at certain times, and on certain occasions. *Ointment* :—perfumed oil or other unguent.

- 9 let there be no lack of ointment on thy head. Enjoy life with the woman whom thou lovest, during all the days of thy vain life, which He hath given thee under the sun, during all the days of thy vanity; for that is thy portion in life, and in thy toil whereat thou toilest under the sun. All that thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is neither work, nor plan, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in Sheol, whither thou art going.
- 11 Again, I saw under the sun that neither to the swift is the race, nor to the men of might the battle, nor yet to wise men bread, nor yet to men of understanding riches, nor yet to men of discernment favour; but seasons and accidents happen to them all. For man also knoweth not his season: like fishes that are caught in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so they, the sons of men, are snared by an evil season, when it falleth upon them suddenly.
- 13 I saw, also, this example of wisdom under the sun, and it appeared great unto me:—A little city, and few men within it; and a great king came against it, and

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10 *Plan*.—Cp. vii. 25.

11 *The swift and the men of might* are not sure of success. *The men of discernment* ("those who know"), however great their knowledge of men, and however keen their insight may be, yet fail of gaining acceptance and popularity.

12 *Snared by an evil season*.—The author speaks apparently of the "evil season" as though it were like the net in a bird-catcher's trap, suddenly enclosing its unwary victim.

14-16 What is said of the little city and the great king *may* describe an historical fact, but I should rather take it as a parable illustrating what is said in ver. 16, that "wisdom is better than might." The same lesson is taught also by the well-known story of Ulysses and the Cyclops in the *Odyssey*. So too—as in ver. 17 we are told that the wisdom of the poor man was despised—we find, in Homer, the Cyclops uttering contemptuous words concerning Ulysses, a person so different from what he had expected:—

ἀλλ' αἰεὶ τινα φῶτα μέγαν καὶ καλὸν ἐδέγμην  
ἐνθάδ' ἐλεύσεσθαι, μεγάλην ἐπιειμένον ἀλκήν,  
νῦν δὲ μ' ἔων ὀλίγος τε καὶ οὐτιδανὸς καὶ ἄκιμος  
ὀφθαλμοῦ ἀλάωσεν, ἐπεὶ μ' ἐδαμάσσατο οἶνφ.

*Od.* ix. 513-516.

15 surrounded it, and built great forts over against it. And  
 he found in it a poor wise man; and the latter delivered  
 the city by his wisdom, yet no man remembered that  
 16 same poor man. And I said, Wisdom is better than  
 might; but the wisdom of the poor man is despised, and,  
 17 as to his words, they are not heard. The words of wise  
 men in quietness are heard above the outcry of him who  
 18 ruleth over fools. Better is wisdom than weapons of  
 war; but one sinner may destroy much good.

# X.

1 Dead flies cause the perfumer's ointment to stink and  
 putrefy; so doth a little folly a man esteemed on account  
 2 of wisdom and honour. A wise man's heart is at his  
 3 right hand, but a fool's heart is at his left. And, even  
 in the road, as the fool walketh, his heart faileth, and he  
 4 saith to all that he is a fool. If the spirit of the ruler  
 rise up against thee, quit not thy place; for yielding  
 5 letteth great offences remain quiet. There is an evil  
 which I saw under the sun, it appearing as an error  
 6 which proceedeth from the ruler: Folly is put in very  
 exalted positions, while great men remain in a lowly  
 7 rank. I saw servants on horses, and princes walking as  
 8 servants upon the earth. He who diggeth a pit may fall

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15 *And he found in it.*—The great king was unexpectedly confronted by the poor wise man, whose skill was brought into direct antagonism with the king's might.

17 *The outcry of him who ruleth over fools.*—Notice the contrast between "the words of wise men in quietness" and "the outcry of him who ruleth over fools."

X. 1 *Dead flies.*—The translation "deadly flies," following the Sept., *μύϊαι θανατοῦσαι*, appears, notwithstanding some analogous forms, to be rendered inadmissible by the context. As Ginsburg remarks, "The simple settling down of *poisonous* flies on perfume would not corrupt its odour, whereas *dead* flies corrupt it." As to the plural nominative with singular verbs, cp. i. 10, and note, and Introd. § 18. *Wisdom and honour*:—or, "honoured wisdom," having regard to the asyndeton in the Hebrew.

2 *Heart.*—The word here would seem to approach the meaning of our phrase "common sense."

6 *Great men.*—The word עשיר, from denoting "a rich man," seems to have come to signify one possessing those qualities which might be looked for in a rich man, fitting their possessor for an exalted rank.

into it, and, as to him who breaketh through a fence, a  
 9 serpent may bite him. He who quarrieth stones may be  
 hurt by them ; he who cleaveth trees may be endangered  
 10 by them. If the iron be blunt, and he sharpen not the  
 edge, then must he exert great strength ; but the right  
 11 guidance of wisdom is an advantage. If the serpent,  
 12 unless charmed, will bite, the babbler is no better. The  
 words of a wise man's mouth are acceptable, but the lips  
 13 of a fool swallow up himself. The beginning of the  
 words of his mouth is folly, and the end of his talk is  
 14 mischievous madness. For the fool multiplieth words :  
 man knoweth not what it is that will be, and what will  
 15 be after him, who can tell him ? The toil of fools  
 wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not

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9 *By them*:—meaning, perhaps, by detached fragments. See Hitzig *ad loc.*

10 Though the general sense seems pretty clear, yet the language presents several difficulties. In this respect, indeed, the verse has been regarded as the most difficult in the book. With regard to the concluding words, it would certainly appear that הַכִּשְׁיִר, notwithstanding its form, must be taken as the inf. constr. followed by הַכֶּמֶה in the genitive. The sense of the word הַכִּשְׁיִר may be illustrated by referring to the frequent use in the Mishnah of a form which appears to be essentially the same, הַכִּשְׁר, denoting "predisposition" or "direction," and which is employed with a special reference to the law of Lev. xi. 38, according to which law, water falling on seed *predisposes* it to become ceremonially unclean, or *gives it a direction* towards uncleanness. And in this passage of Ecclesiastes it is apparently best to take the word as signifying the predisposition and pre-arrangement of the materials to be wrought and the instruments to be employed, so that danger and unnecessary exertion may be avoided, and the work successfully performed. If this view is taken, "pre-arrangement" might be substituted for "right guidance." A general application of the passage to human affairs seems not very difficult to discern.

12 *The lips*:—may be taken as representing the idea "language"; and, on this account, perhaps, we have in the Hebrew a singular verb. But with regard to this explanation, it should be remembered that, in our book, seeming breaches of concord are by no means very infrequent.

15 *Every one of them*.—The transition to the singular in the suffix pronoun is, perhaps, to be accounted for by supposing that the conception changes from that of plurality to the individual fool standing apart from others, while he displays his want of tact and practical acquaintance with the ways of men.

16 how to go to the city. Woe to thee, O land, whose king  
 17 is a boy, and whose princes eat in the morning! Happy  
     art thou, O land, whose king is of noble descent, and  
     whose princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for  
 18 carousing! By great slothfulness the framework de-  
     cayeth, and by slackness of hands, the house drippeth  
 19 through. They prepare food for conviviality, and wine  
     maketh life joyful; but money answereth for all things,  
 20 Even in thy thoughts revile not the king, nor in thy  
     bedchamber revile the great man; for the bird of heaven  
     may carry the sound, and that which hath wings may  
     tell of the matter.

# XI.

1 Cast thy bread upon the face of the waters, for in the

16 *A boy*.—נער may be used not merely of youth, but metaphorically, in accordance with the Rabbinical dictum שְׂקֵנָה חֲכָמָה וְזָקֵן זֶה שֶׁקָּנָה חֲכָמָה, "He is aged who has acquired wisdom." If this view is accepted, בֶּן חוֹרִים in the next verse may be regarded as denoting one possessed of such intellectual or other qualities as might be reasonably looked for in a person of noble or of free birth (cp. ver. 6). And thus it is said (*Aboth* vi. 2) that none is to be esteemed a *ben chorin* except the man who exercises himself in the study of the Law. Graetz took נער as meaning "a slave," with a special historical application. And, without adopting this view, it may be with probability maintained, having regard to the antithesis in *ben chorim*, that *naar*, as here used, does not merely express youth, but involves, also, the idea of lowly condition or mean birth.

17 The ב in בְּנִיּוֹתָי and בְּשֵׁתִי has a signification analogous to the ב of price. In the Sept. the verse ends καὶ οὐκ ἀισχυνθήσονται. A cause for this rendering appears not very remote.

18 *Great slothfulness*.—This is, probably, the sense of the dual, though at least possibly the termination may belong properly to the following word. *Drippeth through*.—The rain comes through.

19 *They prepare food*:—i.e., the food required for a feast and conviviality. *Answereth for all*:—or, "is equivalent to all," the idea of answering easily passing into that of equivalency (cp. v. 20).

20 *The great man*:—more literally, "rich man" (cp. ver. 6).

XI. 1 *Upon the face of the waters*.—It has been suggested that the conception here is that of thin cakes which would at first float upon the surface of the water (עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם). This is not improbable. Afterwards, however, the cakes, like alms given promiscuously to the needy, would seem to be utterly lost. The phrase עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם is used in the Mishnah of a ship floating on the water (*Ohaloth* viii. 5), as well as of other things in similar positions (*Parah* ix. 6; *Betsah* v. 2). The notion that the author of Ecclesiastes alludes to the sowing of rice on muddy land, or allowing

- 2 course of time thou wilt find it. Give a portion to seven  
and even to eight, for thou knowest not in what way  
3 calamity will come upon the earth. If the clouds become  
full of rain they pour it out upon the earth; and whether  
a tree fall on the south, or on the north, in the place  
4 where the tree falleth, there will it be. A man heeding  
the wind will not sow, and one looking at the clouds will  
5 not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the  
wind, nor how the bodily framework ariseth in the  
womb of her who is pregnant, so thou knowest not the  
6 work of God who doeth all. In the morning sow thy  
seed, and at evening rest not thy hand, for thou knowest  
not which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether  
both will be alike good.
- 7 And the light is sweet, and pleasant it is to the eyes  
8 to behold the sun : So that if men live many years, let

it to drop through water into the soil, seems unsuitable. In addition to the difficulty in the way of this opinion resulting from the language here employed, there is the objection that we have apparently no evidence that the cultivation of rice had already become, when Ecclesiastes was written, well known in Palestine; though it must be maintained that this was the case when the Mishnah was composed. See, for example, *Shebiith* ii. 7, when *orez* (אורז) is spoken of as putting forth its roots before the commencement of the year. And in *Demai* ii. 1 we have *orez* grown in Israel distinguished from that which was imported.

3 *And whether a tree fall, etc.*:—implying the uncertainty of the quarter from which calamity may come, and the powerlessness of man to avert it. *Will it be.*—Delitzsch remarks “הוא,” as written, approaches the Mishnaic inflection of the future of the verb הוה.”

5 *As thou knowest not what is the way of the wind*:—looking back to the previous verse. *Nor how the bodily framework ariseth*:—or, more literally, “nor what is the way of the bodily framework.” The כ in באשר אינך יורע מה דרך would thus represent the preceding כעצמים. *Her who is pregnant*:—מלאה. In the Mishnah מליאה occurs, though rarely, in the same sense. The more usual word is מעוברת. *The work of God who doeth all.* Cp. viii. 17. The expression, “who doeth all,” may seem pantheistic. And this inference would be not out of harmony with the strong influence which was exercised on our book by Stoicism.

6 *Which*:—זה, without reference to place, a usage which appears in the phraseology of the Mishnah. Cp. ii. 3.

8 *For they will be many.*—Cp. the words of Antigone with respect to the time she would have to pass in Hades:—

ἐπεὶ πλείων χρόνος  
ὅν δεῖ μ' ἀρᾶσθαι τοῖς κάτω τῶν ἐνθάδε.  
ἐκεῖ γὰρ αἰεὶ κείσσομαι.—SOPHOCLES, *Antig.* 74–76.



them rejoice in them all, and let them remember the days of darkness, for they will be many ; all that cometh  
 9 is vanity. Enjoy, O young man, thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and according to the sight of thine eyes, and know that concerning all these things God will  
 10 bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away affliction from thy body,

<sup>8</sup> *All that cometh is vanity.*—These words are, perhaps, best understood of the shadowy and insubstantial condition of the dead amid the darkness of Sheol :—

“ Jam te premet nox fabulæque Manes

Et domus exilis Plutonia.”—HORACE, *Carm.* i. 4.

“ Nos, ubi decidimus,

Quo pater Æneas, quo dives Tullus et Ancus,

Pulvis et umbra sumus.”—HORACE, *Carm.* iv. 7.

<sup>9</sup> *And know*:—not “but know.” The conjunction, as Graetz justly observes, is continuative, not adversative. The context forbids the latter view. *Concerning all these things*:—the living conformably or not with these precepts, indulgence in pleasure during youth being required by the Law of the Times and Seasons (cp. iii. 1-8). *Will bring thee into judgment*:—meaning, as it would certainly appear, that the youth who refuses to gratify his appetites, and stifles his passions, commits a crime against Nature. It might be thought, perhaps, that we have here simply a *reductio ad absurdum* of the ethical principle, “Live conformably to Nature.” But the opinion is not improbable that we have an application of the principle just mentioned which was actually made and taught in the Jewish schools. To us, at least, such an application may seem less revolting than what is ascribed to Stoicism by Diog. Laert., Plutarch, and Sextus Empiricus. Incest and cannibalism were regarded as quite permissible or laudable. And teaching of this kind was charged even against the great names of Zeno and Chrysippus. Cp. *e.g.*, Sext. Empir. *Adv. Ethicos*, lib. xi. 190-196 ; Plut. *Sto. Repugn.* 22 ; Diog. Laert. vii. 121, 188. If the habits of the lower animals are to be taken as determining what is “conformable to Nature,” incest and cannibalism may be, no doubt, defended. Some other matters it may be best to leave without discussion. I may add that I have no wish to call in question the opinion of Zeller that, “theoretical conclusions” notwithstanding, “the moral character of Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus is quite above suspicion.” *Stoics*, etc., Eng. Trans., New Ed., p. 309. The usual misinterpretation of this passage in Ecclesiastes has resulted from a misunderstanding of the intention of the author, and from a disregard of xii. 12, “Be warned, my son, by these”; be warned, that is, against the teaching of the philosophers. (See *Intro.* § 17, p. 80.)

<sup>10</sup> *Remove sorrow, etc.*—The exhortation here given appears to agree entirely with the view just taken of the previous verse, and even to require

## XII.

- 1 for youth and dawning-time are vanity. And remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the days of evil come, and years arrive, when thou wilt say, I have  
 2 no pleasure in them; Before the sun is darkened, and the light, and the moon, and the stars; and the clouds  
 3 return after the rain, In the day when the guards of the house tremble, and the men of might are bent, and the grinding-women cease, because they have become very few, and the women looking out at the lattice-windows  
 4 are darkened; And the two-leaved door is shut in the street, when the sound of the mill faileth, and it becometh the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of song are  
 5 brought low. Also they are afraid of what is high, and

it, if a congruous sense is to be obtained. *Dawning-time*.—In accordance with, and probably looking back to, ver. 7. Such a rendering as "black hair" seems quite incongruous and unsuitable.

XII. 1 *Thy Creator*.—The plural in Hebrew (בֹּרֵאךְ), as more abstract than the singular, may be regarded as more appropriate to the language of philosophy. The language of this verse is in full accord with the position that what follows to ver. 7 is, for the most part, an allegory descriptive of old age and death.

2 Dr. Charles Taylor, who, in his *Dirge of Coheleth*, advocates a literal, instead of an allegorical, interpretation, admits that "the darkening of the sun, etc. (ver. 2) is clearly figurative." On the other hand, the allegorist can scarcely regard as allegorical the first part of ver. 5.

3 *The women looking out at the lattice-windows*.—In illustration of the figure here used, reference may be made to the phrases אִישׁוֹן עֵין "little man of the eye," and אִישׁוֹן בֶּת עֵין "little man daughter of the eye," both phrases denoting the pupil. The lattice-window would thus, probably, signify the iris.

4 *The sound of the mill faileth*.—This, it would appear, must be understood of the voice, with reference to the varied motions of the mouth and its parts in speaking. Still the designation of the mouth, etc., as "the mill" may be derived primarily from the use of the mouth in mastication. *It becometh*.—This sense, otherwise defensible, is strongly supported by Ps. cvii. 29 סערה לרממה יָקַם "He causeth the storm to become a calm." Delitzsch rendered, "He changed the storm into a gentle breeze." (*Comm. on Psal.*, Eng. Tr.)

5 *They are afraid*.—Old men are possibly spoken of without metaphor. But, according to Plumptre, who may be right, enigma is still present. "To be afraid of a hill expresses not merely or chiefly the failure of strength of limbs to climb mountains, but the temper that, as we say, makes 'mountains out of molehills.'" *The almond tree blossometh*.—This

terrors are in the way, and the almond-tree blossometh, and the locust is a burden to itself, and the caper-fruit splitteth open, for man goeth to his everlasting home, and  
6 the mourners have gone about in the street—Before the cord of silver is detached, and the golden bowl broken, and a water-jar is shattered over the spring, and the

seems by far the most probable rendering. It is scarcely necessary to repeat here inconclusive discussions of פָּרַח, to be found in the Lexicons and previous Commentaries.

5 *And the locust is a burden to itself.*—Sept. καὶ παχυρῶν ἡ ἀντλ. *The caper-fruit splitteth open.*—Sept. καὶ διασκεδασθῇ ἡ κάππαρις. "The caper-shrub is very common in Palestine, and the sight of pods which have opened, and are nearly fallen off, must, of course, be very frequent" (E. F. C. Rosenmüller, *Mineralogy and Botany of the Bible*, translated in Bib. Cabinet). It is worthy of notice here, with reference to the sense of אֲבִינָה that in *Maaseroth* iv. 8 it is given as the law, according to R. Akiba, that, while other parts of the caper-plant are exempt from the law of tithe, the *abiyonoth* are liable "because they are fruit." That תָּפַח should have the intransitive signification "splitteth open," appears to accord with the analogy of the Hiphil conjugation in a good many verbs, and, as to the employment of פָּרַח in this conjugation otherwise than metaphorically no insuperable difficulty need be felt. *Man goeth*,—or, "is going." Ginsburg is probably right that the participle "expresses the approaching future, i.e., he is about to go, or is in the act of going," he having not yet breathed his last; but what this interpreter says with regard to the *mourners* is not equally satisfactory. If "man's going to his everlasting home," and "the mourners going about in the street," are simultaneous, why should we have תָּפַח in the preterite? Rendering more strictly the sense would be *have gone about*. The probability is, that the "mourners" are figurative, and the expression may thus be used of the doleful sounds preceding death; as it may be said of a dying man, "he has already had the death-rattles in his throat." To express, "the mourners already go or loiter about in the street," it may well seem that the participle would have been preferred. Cp. Cant. iii. 3; v. 7. *His everlasting home.*—Whether this expression is used of the grave, or of Sheol, with its many days of darkness, xi. 8 (cp. ix. 6, 10), is not, perhaps, altogether certain, though the latter explanation may seem preferable. *In the street.*—As to the sense of שׁוֹק cp. the Peshito in Acts ix. 11, which translates πορεύθητι εἰς τὴν οὐκον τὴν καλουμένην εὐθεῖαν by לְשׁוּקָא רַמְתַּקְרָא חֲרִיצָא. "In the street" is, probably, to be taken in a general way, just as we sometimes use the phrase.

6 *Before, etc.*—If in the previous verse the corpse had been conceived of as carried out of the house to the grave, Koheleth now goes back a little. On the other view, above given, it is not necessary to suppose this. And it is noteworthy that it is *afterwards* (ver. 7) that dissolution is certainly described. *The cord of silver.*—To understand this of the spinal

- 7 wheel broken at the cistern; And the dust returneth to the earth, as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God  
 8 who gave it. Vanity of vanities, said Koheleth; all is vanity.  
 9 And moreover, since Koheleth was wise, he still further taught the people knowledge; and he gave heed, and  
 10 investigated: he set in order many proverbs. Koheleth sought to find pertinent words, and what was written  
 11 was right, words of truth. The words of wise men are like goads, and those of the editors of collections like nails driven in: they were given by one Shepherd.

cord seems not very difficult. The figure appears suitable, considering the general colour and shining appearance of the spinal marrow. Aristotle notices its *λπαρότης* (*De Part. Animal.* ii. 7). *Detached*—or, “gives way,” A. V. “be loosed.” See *Intro.* § 16. *The golden bowl broken*.—I know of no opinion preferable to that which understands the “golden bowl” of the skull. See *Intro.* § 16. It is not, perhaps, necessary to press the figure too closely, so as to make a difficulty about the “breaking” of the golden bowl. Delitzsch, however, thought it was natural “to compare the breaking of the skull, *Judg.* ix. 53, expressed by *vataritz eth-gulgotto*, with the words here before us, *vatharuts gullath hazzahar*” (*Comm.*, Eng. Trans.); and he even suggested that the author of our book may have had the cognate *וַלְלַת* in view. But if the golden bowl is a lamp-bowl feeding the flame of life, then our passage represents apparently a physiological view different from that of Aristotle, who seems to have looked upon the brain as cold, and to have supposed that the heat of the blood was moderated in the head. *A water-jar*.—Of the nouns in this verse כַּר alone is without the article, *perhaps* because in a duly-furnished house there were several water-jars. That in the latter part of the verse, there is some allusion to the circulation of the blood, seems probable; but see *Intro.* § 16.

7 *As it was*.—The author of *Ecclesiastes* may have had *Gen.* ii. 7 in view here. *Unto God who gave it*.—There is, probably, still allusion to the narrative in *Gen.* ii. Cp. *Intro.* § 15.

9 *Gave heed*.—Possibly, however, we ought to render “listened attentively” (וָשָׁמַע; *Aquila*, *ἠνωτίζατο*). The allusion is, probably, to oral discourses in the Jewish academies. See *Intro.* § 12. *Set in order*.—Involving, perhaps, not only due arrangement, but also some measure of editing. *Proverbs*.—This rendering is open to objection, as being too narrow and restricted. Proverbs, parables, and fables are all *meshalim*. Still it should not be forgotten that there is here, not improbably, an allusion to the Book of Proverbs.

11 *Those of the editors of collections*.—The opinion appears to me to be correct that there is an ellipsis of *כְּבָרֵי* before *אֲסָפוֹת* (cp. *Preston*

- 12 And further, be admonished, my son, by these : as to the making of many books there is no end ; and much close study is a wearying of the flesh.
- 13 The conclusion of the discourse, the universal law, let us hear : Fear God, and keep His commandments, for

*ad loc.*). This view, though (as presented in the previous edition) it was contested by Delitzsch, seems alone practicable. For other instances of ellipsis in our book, the reader may be referred to viii. 1 and xi. 5. On the words "editors of collections," see Introd. § 17 ; and, in addition to what is there said, I may ask the reader to compare Ecclus. xxxiii. 16 with the use of אִסְפוֹת of collecting ears of corn, gleanings (Ruth ii. 7), and of gathering in produce (Exod. xxiii. 10). Much of Hebrew learning consisted in the gathering and storing up of the dicta of sages, of *mescholim* (cp. Job vii. 8 sq. ; xii. 3 ; xiii. 12 ; xv. 18 sq. ; xvi. 4). Thus the phrase אִסְפוֹת בְּעָלֵי אִסְפוֹת "men of collections," might, perhaps, be translated "learned men," and so furnish a still closer parallel to חכמים. Still, the wisdom of the persons so designated is evidently conceived of as imparted to others ; and, besides, there is probably an allusion to the composite structure of our present book (Introd. § 17). So that, on the whole, "editors of collections" may be as good a rendering as is attainable. *Nails driven in.*—The idea that there is an allusion to tent-pins or stakes, seems not improbable, considering the context. The "wise men" and the *baale asuppoth* are, as would appear to be implied, under-shepherds, deriving their words from one ἀρχιποίμην.

12 *My son*.—in accordance with the supposition that the author has still before his mind the Book of Proverbs. On this verse cp. Introd. § 17.

13 *The universal law*.—Cp. Introd. § 4, p. 11. The כל in this verse presented a good deal of difficulty, until what appears to me a reasonable and probable solution was suggested by that very frequent formula of the Mishnah זו הכלל, meaning "this is the general rule" or "principle," or "this is the universal law." After particular examples or precepts have been stated or discussed, the discussion is very commonly closed with a general rule introduced by the formula in question. There is here a pretty certain trace of the influence of Greek philosophy, and especially of that Aristotelian inductive method which aimed at proceeding from Particulars to a Universal, τὸ καθόλου. Further, it may be reasonably maintained that both הכלל and הכל have essentially the same signification, and that both mean strictly "the totality." Indeed, in accordance with the analogy of verbs פָּלַל=פָּלַע. The pointing of כלל with a instead of o would make no essential difference. The conclusion, then, may be inferred as probable that, through the influence of the Aristotelian philosophy, it was already, when Ecclesiastes was written, a common practice in the Jewish schools to close a discussion with a statement of a general or universal principle or law, and that the author of Ecclesiastes here conforms to a usual practice. At a subsequent period, and prior to

- 14 this is the universal law for man. For all God's work will He bring into judgment, concerning everything hidden, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

the redaction of the Mishnah, הכלל seems to have been substituted for הכל, the change having been made possibly for the sake of greater distinctness of expression. *The universal law for man.*—The כל here must be understood in the same sense as that preceding, though the article passes to the genitive following. The impracticability of such a rendering as "for this is all men," affords a strong argument in favour of the position that כל is here to be understood in a peculiar technical sense.

14 *For all God's work will He bring into judgment, etc.* :—pointing מעשה האלהים. The opinion that this verse speaks of the judgment of each individual man, and not of the vindication of the Divine administration, seems out of harmony with the general tenor of the book. To express such a sense there would probably have been a construction similar to that of xi. 9, so that we should have had יביאך האלהים כעל כל מעשיך. במשפט. Then it is very noteworthy that, if the ordinary rendering were correct, the construction in this passage would be contrary to the general usage of our book, where האל repeatedly occurs as nominative to a verb, but, in these cases, when without *van* prefixed (or כי preceding האל with a participle in v. 20), the verb always stands first. Moreover מעשה האל is an expression specially characteristic of Ecclesiastes, and, in fact, occurs in this precise form nowhere else in the O. T. Besides, it had been employed as recently as xi. 5. Further (and this is very important, on account of the connection between Ecclesiastes and the Book of Job, *Introd.* § 8), in Job a law-suit, a "coming into judgment" of God, and of man in the person of Job is repeatedly imagined, and regarded as desirable, if impossible (Job xxiii. 3-7 *al.*). The discussion in Job had ended with a theophany; and it may well seem probable that Ecclesiastes also looks forward to a divine manifestation. But, however strong these arguments may be, the reason why the punctuators and accentuators have given the text as they have done can scarcely be difficult to discern. Mr. Lasarovitsch, a Rabbinical student, has directed my attention to the fact that Sforno regarded מעשה as construct. But this fact notwithstanding, Sforno's exegesis of the passage certainly cannot be accepted. *Everything hidden*, in accordance with what has been said, is to be referred to the mysterious and seemingly anomalous facts in the government of the world. The Peshito inserts ונלם "and manifest"; and, indeed, if the passage spoke of the judgment of individuals, such an addition might not be unsuitable. But the fact that this addition is not in the Hebrew affords an argument against the ordinary view, and in favour of that which I have given. This argument, however, if it stood alone, might not be of sufficient strength: cp. Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 5.

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